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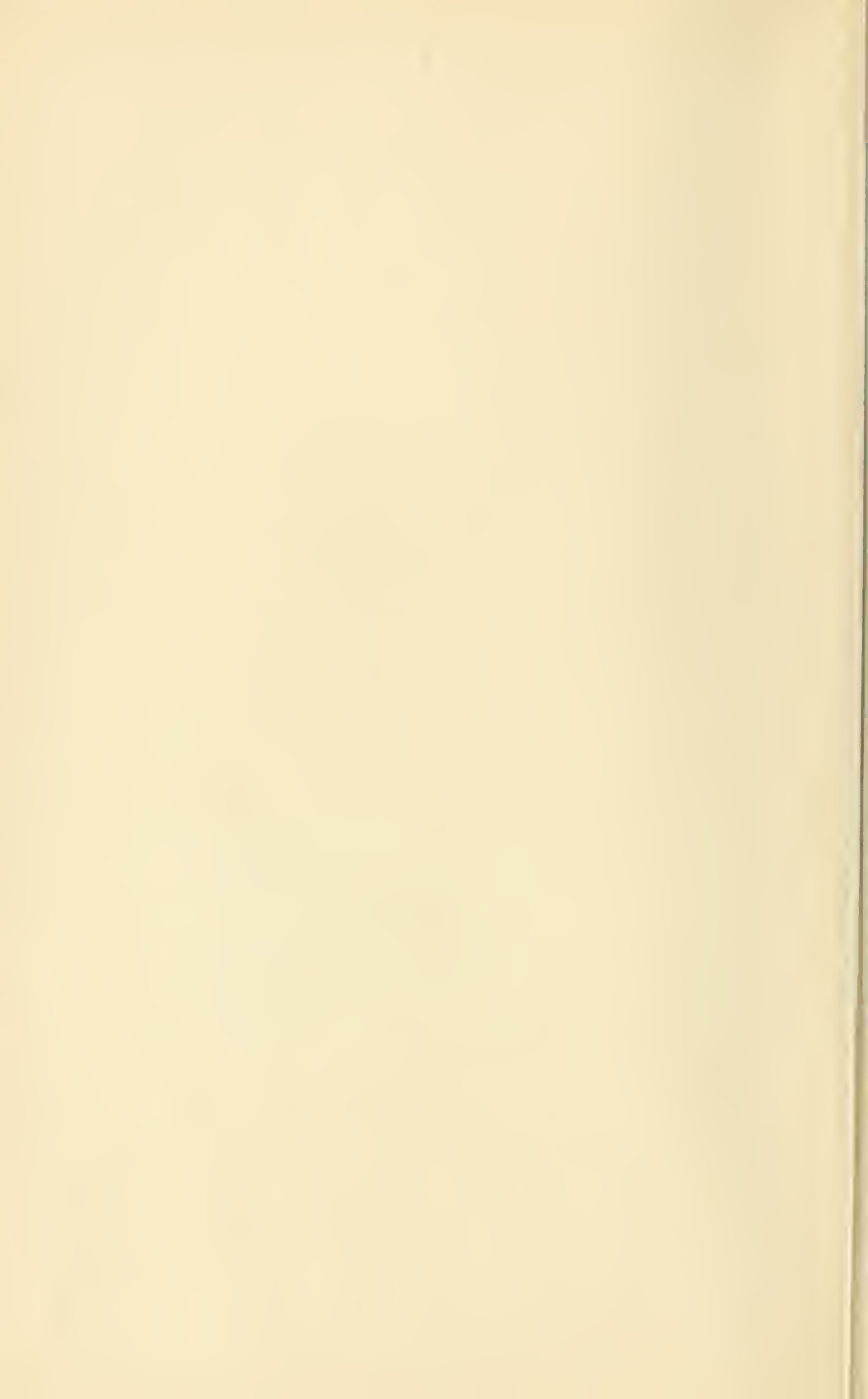
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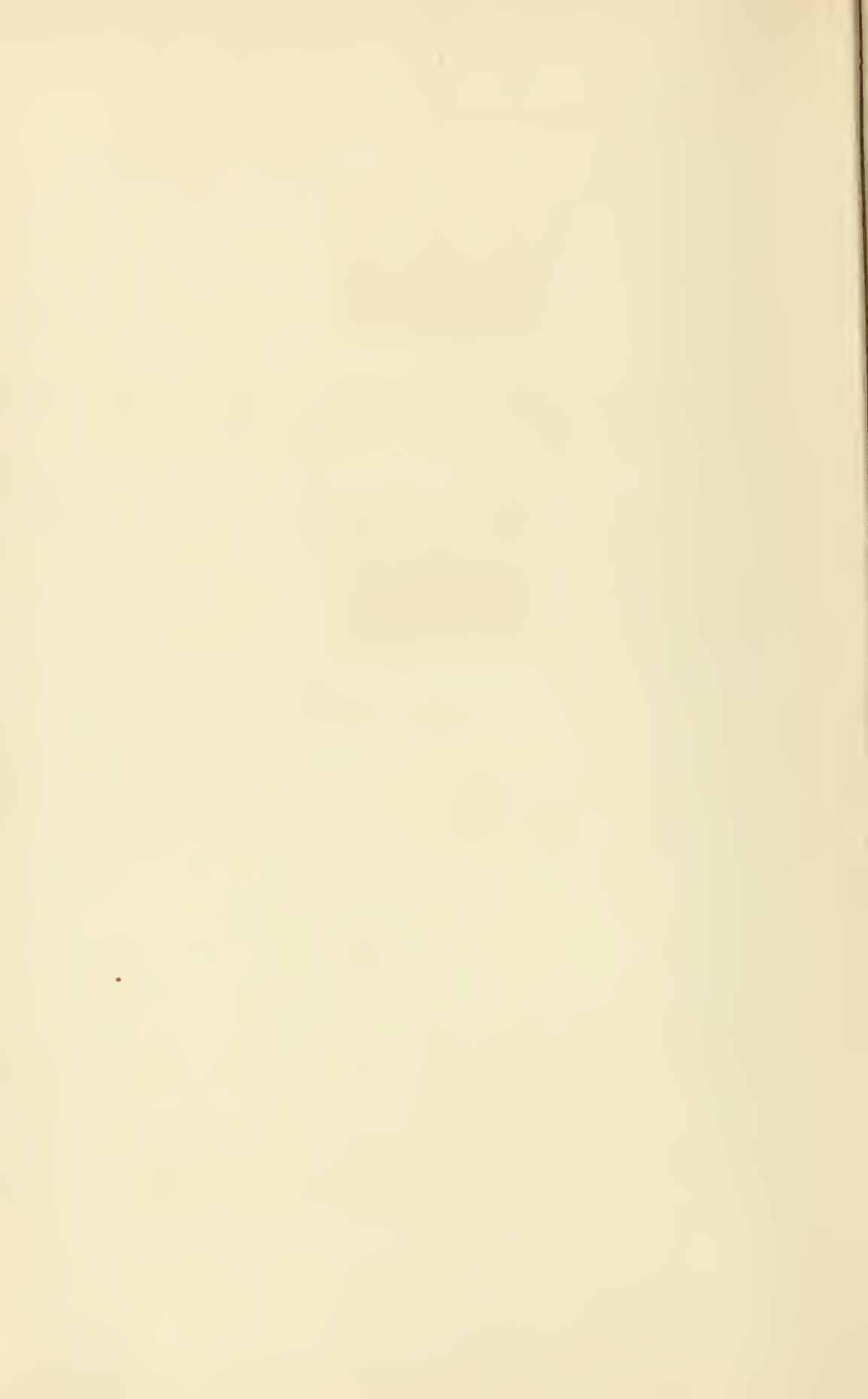
LAKE FRONT



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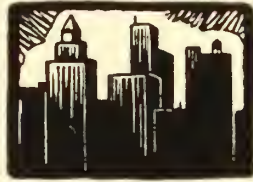
MY SISTER CECILIA

*Whose faith and love
created this book*





LAKE FRONT



RUTH RUSSELL

Wood Cuts by
RUTH KELLOGG

THOMAS S. ROCKWELL COMPANY
CHICAGO

1931

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*Since this is the story of a city,
truth to the lives of individuals
has been subordinated to truth to
the life of the city.*

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LAKE FRONT



P ROLOGUE





*Like a letter N
the boy sat in
the deep
embrasure*

ANNO DOMINI
SIXTEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-FIVE

PERHAPS they would roast him alive. Nose in pamphlet, the boy read the last installment of the Jesuit Relations. The giant Brebeuf was in the camp of the Hurons at Point St. Ignace, farthest west in the new-found world. "The Iroquois are coming; escape while you can," some one whispered to the priest. "I stay here," Brebeuf

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answered. Hurrah for the Norman! Down the lake point sneaked the enemy, while the Hurons seemed drugged. From bark hut to bark hut, Brebeuf strode and found warriors—would you call them that?—asleep in smoky huts, kicking mangy dogs, or scratching bugs that ran on their red bodies . . . Of course, the Iroquois beat.

To a stake, the Iroquois bound the black robe. They thrust iron bars in fire, and when the iron was white-red, they branded him. The captive Hurons could smell the flesh sizzle. Water, they boiled and poured it steaming on his head. "Baptism!" they shrieked. Then out flashed the Iroquois knives, whetted bright and thin. Zip through the flesh they went; red blood they drew, but no white cries. "We'll make you plead for mercy," the Iroquois boasted. Nearer to the heart, they cut with knives. Still no cry. Too near they went. Brebeuf was dead. . . . So they ate his heart and burned him up to ashes.

Torture was nothing.

All you had to do, thought the boy Jacques Marquette, was remember, "Just a few minutes more and I'll be with God and Our Lady forever."

Like the letter N, the boy sat in the deep embrasure; his toes and his thin stooped back pressed hard against the stone. He closed his black blazing eyes, and under his bristly dark hair his ivory face was tense. . . . White and shining, God and Our Lady welcomed a martyr to Heaven. . . .

What would his father say if his son declared, "I want

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to be a priest." . . . Through the leaded diamond panes, across the gray drizzle, the boy looked down the rocky slopes of Laon. High fort walls angled up the mountain; beneath the walls were sharpened stakes for enemies to fall on . . . Time out of mind, what fighting had been there! And always his forbears in the thick of the battle!

What would his fighter-father say? . . . That night, the boy sat on a stool before the wide fireplace. Red were the flames beneath the great stone chimney breast. . . . To his left his mother, in a spreading dress of dull shiny wine-colored silk with a fan of lace behind her head, was enthroned on a carved chair; her feet you could not see at all for they were lifted on the hassock that showed just a little beneath her skirts. . . . To his right, his sister bent her head—the hair all gathered in a pearl snood—over her embroidery. . . . Beyond her, near a pointed window, his four brothers talked of King's Guardsmen and Cardinal's Musketeers. . . . A lackey lit the candles.

Like a soldier on the march, his father came down the room from the door behind them. His broad plumed hat was in his hand; his long black cape, a-swing.

Tall and thin in his brown doublet and hose, the boy turned his back to the fire and faced his father.

"I want to go to be a Jesuit," he said, straight out.

In his forward march, his father lost a step; through the corners of his eyes, the boy saw the women look up astonished; behind him, he could hear his brothers gasp and snicker. . . .

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Down toward the fire, beyond the boy, the father paced his way and took a broad stance before the flames. His head was bent. Suddenly he faced the lad and looked him up and down as though he was new to the house.

"So. You want to be a teacher? Or a courtier-priest? Or a choir-stall poet, perhaps?" There was scorn in his tones, as if those were aims that weak men nursed in their hearts.

"No, my father. Missioner in New France."

The boy could hear his brothers hit each other's backs and chortle. He could see the wave of his mother's white hand as she dismissed them from the room. He glimpsed his sister's lifted face—eyes and mouth like three round o's.

His father drew his lifted lip down and caught it with his lower teeth. His steely eyes grew kindly. A soldier priest, in the roughest camp in the world—that was a calling worthy of a man. . . . He took the boy's hand in the two of his; if there was awe in his eyes, there was also something like a threat, as if he said:

"Remember a soldier takes the luck of the camp and field, and never turns back."

COLD and fresh-smelling was the cedar-bark chapel at Point St. Ignace.

Before a picture of the blue-robed Virgin—it was painted on Chinese taffeta by nuns in France—knelt the young

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missioner. This was the Feast of her Immaculate Conception, and he wanted to give her a feast-day present.

"I would go farther west to new tribes," he said.

She was his Lady. More to him than mother and sister, and they would have her more. What proof of love for her could he give in a wilderness already gained by Brebeuf?

Cries of the Hurons sounded from the beach, cries of greeting. The gritty noise of a canoe being shelved on the sands—"Pardon, Marie."

By the canoe, on the snow-driven strand, was a young man in fur cap and short fur coat.

"Sieur Joliet!" the priest exclaimed and ran to embrace his young friend from Quebec. Friends you could touch, here and now, they were good too.

Joliet was breathless, excited, laughing.

"You're to come with me," he said. "I have letters."

"Where, then?"

"The river to the west—we're both to explore it."

Sealed and stamped, the letters. Commissions from a viceroy or the Queen of Heaven? "Merci, Marie. . . ."

In May, the month of Mary, they pushed off. . . . Indian-fashion, the priest knelt on the rushes in the canoe and dipped his paddle in the clear blue water till Ignace was gone, and the green turtle-back island below it. . . .

Swampy portage. . . . The great river! It gave him joy he could not utter for this was the way to new tribes to be won. . . . Long easy floating till the canoes were seized by

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the turbid waters of an in-rushing river. . . . "Frenchmen, how bright the sun shines when you come to visit us!" exclaimed the Illinois Indians, sun-worshippers; to them, the black robe made the promise that he would come back and make a mission for them. . . .

Marshy shores with feathery foliage. . . . Stifling bayous where mosquitos buzzed and bit. . . . Strange tribes that threatened them, then feasted them with dog. . . . These Indians told them: "The mouth of the river is in the Gulf of Mexico. The Spaniards are there." . . . Not through California, not through Virginia, but straight to the Gulf rolled the great river. . . . With the long-wanted knowledge gained, they turned north, joyful.

The Grand Monarch would be pleased. Small matters like empires satisfied grand monarchs. But only souls mattered to God and Our Lady. . . . It was time then to keep the promise with the Illinois.

October leaves were red when he and his two *donnés* took the trail again. . . . How soon the roll of the canoe on the surf turned his stomach queasy! Swamps and dog diet don't improve digestion. . . . November came, and to their right were black trees and white cliffs set between gray sky and gray lake. . . .

One day, with his cloak pulled close against cold, he walked the sands. He felt he could no longer suffer the roll of the boat. . . . Alone, he felt a parching thirst, saw a red-blood hemorrhage, fell prostrate, then rose and stumbled on. . . .

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"Health of the sick, pray for us."

Chicagou was near. It was a place with a river that led to the portage, and on the river the canoe could lie quiet and he could rest. With hope, he looked ahead at the wind-swept sand dunes and the stunted trees along the river banks.

"Regard the river which is frozen," sang out Pierre Porteret as the two *donnés* swung toward shore.

"No more canoe!" called Jacques. "We can no longer use the canoe."

"Then our legs, let us use them," smiled the sick man.

Spiky were the bare twigs he grasped, hard were the trees he leaned against, frozen the earth lumps beneath his feet. "Comfort of the afflicted, pray for us." Now the main stem of the river right-angled into the north and south branches. Was there question in the eyes of the *donnés*? He nodded south. On to the portage!

With the portage in sight, what a time to sink to the ground. . . . "Mother of good counsel, pray for us." . . . Yes, they might build him a shelter. . . . All winter they were held to the cabin; outside were the snow on the prairie and the stiff black trees. . . . Would death come? "Gate of Heaven, pray for us." Would he get strength to make the mission? "Virgin most powerful, pray for us." . . . With March, new health, and each said to the other:

"When shall we go?"

"At once," the river answered.

Early one March morning, the river rose and flooded them

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out of the cabin. . . . Whipping, shuddery winds at dawn;
pools black in the melting snow. . . . The priest's feet
slopped through slush and were sucked down by muddy
ooze. . . . His shoulder packet galled him to breathless-
ness. . . . On to the people of the place! . . .

“Morning star, pray for us.”



Whipping, shuddery winds at dawn; pools black in the melting snow

PART ONE





*Starey bright on
the paper beneath
the clock shelf*

CHAPTER ONE
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
THIRTY-FIVE

A YELLOW glow spread out from behind them like the light from saints in holy pictures.

Not that her mother—

“You see now,” her mother said; with her white head lifted—it was early white—she stood proud in her ill-gotten linsey-woolsey dress, “there’s not the place you said.”

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At that she pressed the candle closer to the wall till it must be starey bright on the paper she had pinned beneath the clock shelf.

"Indeed and there is," answered Uncle James, determined for a change. Once in a while, he stood up to her, and her getting gabby, but most of the time he held his tongue, humble-like. That came along of being too religious.

"Then find Chicago on it," ordered her mother, scornful; was that how she got her way—by making other people feel like worms?

"It's only not marked," answered her uncle and moved from the paper to the table where the rest of the family sat. How his big canal boots clumped! His fingers were black-nailed—you could see that as he took the quill pen out of the box of shot and jabbed it into the ink-pot.

When he knelt down at the map and studied it, the fifteen year old girl leaned forward to look. A map of America—Atlantic to Mississippi. East to west, the map seemed shaded, dark gray to white. Crowds of names along the coast and no names at all in the West.

"Here, mind you, is the place." With that, her uncle put an x west of the base of the lake that hung down like a mitten on a line.

"Is it certain you are?" asked her mother, sharp.

"Didn't Jim Tully have a map marked by his cousin, the shiphand in Buffalo, and wasn't Jim after showing it to me?"

The two of them began to talk so low that the girl could catch

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only a word now and again. . . . Dropping her knitting, she sat idle and watched the shadows that jumped about with every move of her mother's candle. Shadows, big and fearsome, that rose up and down over the three rough wood doors and the bristly plaster wall to her right; shadows that flew like bats through the brown timbers of the slanting half-a-roof covering the kitchen; shadows that crept along the floor and tried to smother out the red strips of light cast by the stove to the left. . . . Her mother made shadows.

Was her uncle telling the things the shiphand said? "No danger from the Indians any more. . . . Treaty had been made. . . . Town just got charter. . . . Canal to be dug at portage. . . . People buying land, crazy-like. . . . Solicitors earned \$500 a day with land deeds. . . ."

They must be planning to go to this place, yet her Aunt Ellen, opposite, sat with no interest in her; her head bent down till her black cap had slid on her forehead, her eyes were on her work, her knitting needles were icicles melting into a stocking—as long as she could look after her sister's children, one place was like another to her. . . .

Now her mother spoke: "Good place for boarding-house then? . . . They could go after Easter. . . . When would Whitsunday be?" With that she reached to the clock shelf for the prayer-book and almanac and placed them in Uncle James' hands, the while she held the light for him to read. . . . "Whitsunday in the Table of Movable Feasts. . . . In May? . . . Now the weather forecast. . . . Fair? . . .

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"Had he really advised going?"

Her uncle answered: "Indeed and he had. . . . The farther west you went, the better chance you had. . . . Nobody asked who you were—just want to know what you could do. . . . A chance for everyone. . . . No nabobs. . . ."

No nabobs! How she hated them! They rode in their carriages in Utica and turned up their noses at the "ignorant Irish." Suddenly the girl writhed, and the short leg of her stool hit the planking with a little bang. . . . Had it been her fault she was taken out of school? But James—she'd see James got his chance and show the world all the Irish needed was education.

While her mother kept on at the map, Uncle James clutched his great coat from the rack between the clock and the door. Just like the nice big clumsy man of him, he did not notice that he was getting the coat on so that the high waist line was crooked and the wide collar caught under the shoulders. . . . Without a word, he took her mother's candle and brought it to the lantern of black tin with holes in it. He slid up the hatch of the lantern and lit the tallow dip inside. Yellow specks jumped over his smooth tanned face with the white hair above it. Giving back the candle, he clicked up the latch of the door and was gone. . . . A gust of air, cold but fresh and with the smell of turned fields in it, blew into the kitchen.

With the gust, the flame of the table-candle swept across

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the hot tallow and pushed a bright drip down the side, a shiny drip that hardened into bumpy yellow-brown. . . . When her mother turned and blew out her candle, she looked, stern, across the room at her fifteen-year old daughter. . . . What was the trouble now? . . . Oh, yes. The knitting. . . . Her mother slammed the tin candle-stick on the deal table and pinched the red wick as if she liked to kill out things. . . .

Since she was going in to Utica to evening Ash Wednesday services, she went to the coat rack for her cape and bonnet. . . . That cape and bonnet! All the other Irishwomen of the parish wore shawls on them, but her mother? Never. Shawls, her mother said, reminded her of bogs and poverty—so with her first saved money she bought the wrap and the linsey-woolsey dress. To save money faster, she had taken her two daughters out of school before they'd scarce learned their letters. . . . Now that she wanted a black silk gown and a gold chain, would she sell James' chance for him too? . . . She would not. Not as long as her daughter lived to prevent it.

Big and black, the bonnet went on first. How careful she was to tie the stiff ribbons a little to one side of her chin. After that, she swung her cape about her like as if it was a royal mantle, lifted it at the nape of the neck, and pulled the front down smooth. . . . Outside, the rig gritted in the mud, and a wheel grated along the porch step. . . . Now they were to be rid of her. . . . Not yet. On her way out, her mother suddenly cut to the right and tried the pantry door.

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Still locked. Last night she had turned the key in it, and since then not one of them had had a crumb to eat, not even eleven-year-old James. Her mother was the kind people liked to say, "Mrs. O'Mara is a good Catholic, surely; she keeps a strict Black Fast in her house, come Ash Wednesday."

Before she left the door, her mother spoke sharp to Aunt Ellen:

"See Jane hurries with that knitting and send the other two to bed."

The door banged, and James rose from his place. His poem paper was limp from his holding it—he was studying for the Friday afternoon program—and his lips still were mouthing, "The rank is but the guinea stamp; a man's a man for a' that." . . . There he'd gotten clear across the floor to the third door at the right, still muttering his piece, but saying no good-night. . . . Had his feet dragged a little? Was he very hungry? Aunt Ellen watched him too and wondered the same things, perhaps. . . . If you could only be sure she was with you and the children. . . . Suddenly he turned, and with the smile made you think you could never do enough for him, he said, "Good night."

Mary Ellen was different. From her place facing her aunt, she did not stir but sat with her pink hands folded on the bundle of gray rags she was supposed to be braiding into a rug. Her dark eyes were dreamy, and her head was a little bent so you could see most the part in her brown hair.

"Time to go to bed, Mary Ellen," reminded her aunt.

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How quick her head came up!

"When I haven't had breakfast yet, how should I know it's time to go to bed?" She cocked one eye at her aunt and laughed, impertinent. Then she jumped up—she was only thirteen but was fast getting to look like a woman grown—threw her arms about her aunt's neck, and ran off.

Did Aunt Ellen wince? It was always hard to understand what Aunt Ellen thought. . . . Only that morning, Aunt Ellen had taken the children to Utica to the early Ash Wednesday services. Knelt at the altar they had while the priest dipped a thumb in ashes and rubbed it in the shape of a cross on each forehead, saying Latin words that meant, "Remember, man, thou art but dust, and into dust thou shalt return." Then the priest, he had given a sermon and talked about Lenten penances. "In honor of the Forty Days Christ fasted in the desert," he said, "restrain some natural desire—something that will come hard." That seemed like a word direct to her to stop her feelings toward her mother. . . . But weren't her feelings right? . . . Should you pretend a person was good, when there was an evil power in her to keep people down for the sake of her pride?

Some people said your mother stood in the place of God to you—how could that be, for God was good. . . . Even her father, easier on children than most fathers, had always told her to be careful to obey her mother. How she missed him! Sometimes she thought he had died out of loneliness for Donegal. Often he had talked of the place, gray boulders,

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brown bog, and pools purply-like. No little thing about Donegal had he forgot, nor big one: The fierce wet winds that whipped him as he trudged to school and carried his two blocks of peat for the school fire. The curlews that swooped about his head as he stood bare-legged in the sea at sunset. The black kelp he wrenched from the sea floor and slapped into his rush basket. The rich neighbor who had educated him. His own return from school to the row of white, thatched cabins. The people of the place, stand-offish till they were sure he had not grown proud. At last, his wife saying, "For the sake of the children you should earn the high wage paid to laborers on the Erie Canal." So he had come. And died, lonely.

Aunt Ellen, too, said a mother had to be respected. Once the girl had burst out to her aunt, "I hate my mother." What a whiteness in her aunt's face while she said cold: "Remember the commandment, 'Honor thy father and mother.' And the next time you go to confession, tell what you said." So the girl had, and the priest, taking his stand with all other grown people, had given her the Stations of the Cross for a penance.

All that bother for her mother. Yet it made the girl think twice before she spoke up to her parent. Besides, there was something about her mother—

Was Aunt Ellen going to bed? There she was putting her work on the table. Why was her mouth straight as a minus sign? Now she rose like someone who had work that wouldn't wait. Turned now she was and walking toward the clock—

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quickly so that her gray house shawl stood out from her billowy skirts. Her arm was raised; her thumb and finger were like pincers, shadow-white, as they went back of the clock. They had fastened on something and pulled at it. There it was, long, dark, rusty—the key to the pantry door.

A laugh gulped in her throat as she heard Aunt Ellen say: “Call the children, Jane; I’m going to give them bread and milk.”

She dared her sister for the sake of the children, did she? Then she’d be your ally against your mother and for Mary Ellen and James. Especially for James.



*A dressed-up man he
was, with a high silk hat*

CHAPTER TWO
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
THIRTY-FIVE

LADIES and gentlemen, we are now approaching the greatest town in the west," the land agent shouted. A dressed-up man he was, with a high silk hat—what if a wind came up sudden?—and with red-jowled cheeks that waggled the white collar points of his black stock as he

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talked. Since he'd gotten on the boat at Milwaukee, he talked Chicago steady.

"'Twill be the New Orleans of the North," he cried, and held up a paper unrolled while people crowded round to look. It was a big plat that showed the city streets in white, parks in green, church lots in yellow, schools in red, and the great port in blue.

"'Twill be the gateway to the West," he went on. As she looked at the plat, she could see fine buildings, ships at anchor, and, through the streets, processions of canvas-covered wagons going west.

"'Twill be the Odessa of the West," he exclaimed. What was Odessa? He said it was the great grain center of Russia. . . . Why didn't the others of her family listen to him? James watched the foam the side wheel churned in the smooth water. Mary Ellen couldn't keep her eyes off the white woman who nursed a baby black as the ace of spades. Their aunt and uncle were in the hold getting their traps together, but their mother was all ready to leave, down to the lace mitts of her—the mitts must be turning green, and her standing at the prow in full sunlight.

"Sixty dollars for this lot, ladies and gentlemen," said the agent, his dirty finger on the map. "Your last chance. As the poet so truly says, 'They'll cost more, On Shore.'"

Sixty! You'd think he was selling a whole farm instead of a small lot. People hooted at him. No wonder. . . .

"There it is! There's Chicago."

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At the shout, what a thrill shot through her! Quick, she ran to the rail, and people pressed from behind till she thought her ribs would snap.

Chicago! Place she'd dreamed about ever since she'd heard there were no nabobs here, and everyone was after getting his chance. And now—all that was off to the southwest was a bit of a white shine between the flat low beach and the trees. . . . A fort and a lighthouse, whitewashed. . . . To the right of them, a blue river with its mouth cut through a yellow sand-bar. . . . To the right again, a log house with four poplars at a front fence, the little home stiff as a child's Noah's Ark.

"Haw! Haw!" some people guffawed, as they turned to the man in the silk hat, "sixty for a lot in the wilderness!"

Surely the land agent had said more'n was in his prayers. . . . Through the cut in the sand, they were going now. The boat sloshed water up and down the piles. . . . A sunny haze was over the trees ahead. . . . How flat the shores seemed, dark brown shores with fat oniony shoots along them! . . . It was breathless hot and smelly between the trees. . . . Now a half-breed in a deerskin jacket—almost hairless it was—ran out on a wood boat-landing and called "Ben venoo!" . . .

Along the walk, iris spikes with their deep purple blossoms. Ahead, a jack-knife bridge with its blades in the air. . . . At the left end of the bridge, people were bunched up to watch the boat go by; their hands were over their eyes; some of the crowd spied friends and ran down the shore toward

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them. . . . "Hello! Hello!" they cried, excited. . . . As the boat went through, the people on shore hurried west to the landing-place.

Red Indians beyond the bridge. . . . No welcome from them. . . . Their toes sunk in the muck, some Indian boys, stark naked, watched at the river edge. . . . In the grassy spot behind them were tepees. . . . Slinging a black kettle onto a tripod, a squaw stood with her back to the boat. . . . A brave harnessed a horse to poles; the poles dragged on the ground and were joined from earth to horse's tail with flat boards. . . . On this slanting platform, a squaw, holding a bound papoose, climbed. . . . "That's the way they hit the trail," called someone; "They better hit it damned soon."

Arms held out for boat ropes, the men at the landing dock waited, watchful. . . . A crowd, and beyond them, flat ox-carts with two disc-wheels. . . . Light, low horse carts with rims round the edge and hay inside to soften the jolts for the passengers. . . . "This way to the best hotel in town," shouted a man in the driver's seat of a big wagon with planks laid across it. . . . A negro dressed in red rode a horse that had red clothes on too—he was the land-sales shouter. . . .

South lay a dirt road that ran with the river. On the far side of the street was a string of slab-fronts, squatty they were; looked like the prairie was sucking 'em in. . . .

Time to go below. . . . Everyone was carrying things, everyone jabbing his neighbor in the dark. . . . Some dragged strapped trunks with brass studs that shone in the

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blackness of the hold; others carried bundles on poles. . . . When you came out on the gang-plank, you had to blink against the light. . . .

"Here, my good man, come get my trunk for me," shouted a proud Easterner to an idler on the wharf.

"Me?" shouted the idler, as loud as could be. "Ain't nobody's servant but my own."

How the crowd laughed, while the proud man looked red and mad. Everybody here was like her, and hated folks that talked airy.

With her elders, she sat on their baggage, and the two children perched at the rear of the cart, dangling their feet over. . . . "Giddap," shouted the driver who was to take them to the Mokopo. . . . Gobs of dirt under the pawing of the horses, then the wagon jolted west on the river road.

"Pret' muddy hereabouts." The driver was a man liked to chat. "But not so bad as a few months back. Why, last February I saw a head bobbing up and down out of a puddle on this here South Water street, and I says, 'Stranger, need help?' and he answers back, 'Don't mind me, partner; I'm riding a good horse.'"

Not a scrap of attention was her mother paying but talking she was in low tones with Uncle James.

"Is there any ready-built cabin for sale here?" Uncle James asked.

"Why yes," the driver answered, "I got a two-room cabin with a loft. During the land rushes, I use the loft for boarders."

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At that, her mother primed up her lips and looked, meaning, at her brother. Uncle James asked the price and found it too high.

"Too high!" exclaimed the driver, angry. "Top-notch, all prices are, these days. This ain't '31 when the land that Tremont's on, sold for a cord of wood. Nor '34 when it bought a yoke of steers. No, this is—well, you being a stranger can't realize. But come round tonight and look at the place. North of the river—after you cross the bridge, anyone'll tell you where Jim Bell lives."

Stores had big platforms before them; one window was full of blue and pink calico, all festooned. . . . What was that, that came behind their wagon and looked like a pony with wings? Not wings at all, but just big leather bags. . . . A short stocky man led the beast. . . .

"If there ain't Looie, the mail-man," cried the driver, joyful, as the short man came alongside. "Got a letter for me? No? Well, go back and get one. Can't ride no more, can you? When you going to get a stage?"

A pony mail-carrier! . . . Yes, James was watching. . . . Ahead was a crowd who cheered the mail man and he coming toward them, waving. . . . The people swarmed about him till he disappeared in the midst of them. . . . Now the wagon was near the gathering; beyond was the log-cabin store with the U. S. Postoffice lettered on the window. . . . On the low porch, a big man with a full beard had already opened a bag and thrown a newspaper to its owner. . . .

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"Read it!" the idlers yelled, and shoved the man to a dry-goods box sunk in the mud. Willy-nilly, he had to mount. . . . What was he reading? . . . "Harrison" was a word she caught, and then there came a hoot and hiss through the crowd. . . . Democrats they were then, for Van Buren and against Harrison. . . . All at once, a single voice sang out, "Hooray for Harrison!" and with no time lost, a hand shot out, and you could hear it crack on the jaw of the man who shouted; the shouter fell back stiff as a plank. . . . You could see his straight blond hair fly up and settle smooth again as he plopped in the mud. . . .

Suddenly she laughed. . . . Maybe the place was small, sunk in the mud, not the great city some people made out. What did that matter? Already she loved this place where people spoke out free. What was a beating or two if you could have your say? Oh, this was a town that gave all their chance; it was the place for James. . . . She laughed, glad her family had come here.

"Hold on," shouted the driver.

Boxes tottered with the turn! She clutched the driver's seat, while James twisted his head to laugh. Why not indeed? "This is your town, James." South they rode now, and off to the right was a green scummy slough.

At the corner of the next cross road was a tavern, long, gray, two-story with blue shutters, square-paned windows, and a center doorway with a sill edged with glass. Set slantwise, the place was as if it had been put up before the roads came.

LAKE FRONT

"Yonder's the Mokopo!" exclaimed the driver.

'Twould be by far the biggest house she'd ever slept in; yet, surely, the brick hotels of Utica, put next this, would cast shadows over it. Lots of space about the building—to the south were far houses, scattered haphazard; to the west, cows and trees, along the shimmery edges of the river. . . . Round the half-circle of rut before the tavern door, the cart drove. A fat, jolly, dark man in a blue coat with brass buttons stood on the step. . . . Like a play actor, he threw out his arms in welcome. . . .

"Monsieur DuBois himself," exclaimed the driver and swept his hand from his hat outwards.

"B'jour," the innkeeper answered, short, to the man. A French word, maybe. "The guests? They wish perhaps to know my charge? Bien! One dollar a big folk the day, and the boy and the girls I throw out, by gar."

One dollar! How costly! Half the price of a calico dress! Would they stop! Surely not. Yes, her mother nodded to Uncle James, who said to the innkeeper, "We'll stay."

"The rooms," went on the host, "they are not ready yet, but the dinner, I go tell the kitchen you are arrived. Then I will help put the boxes inside."

"Take the baskets in, Jane," ordered her mother. The girl lifted two—how the reed handles cut into the flesh! . . . She scraped her muddy shoes on the metal bar fixed to the step and put her hand to the knob. Alone, she was going in to a strange place, opening a new door.

LAKE FRONT

On the other side came a voice, the innkeeper's high-pitched.

" . . . an Irish widow-woman for you, Lannon."

Confused by the new place, she did not really see the Lannon man but thought that in this big room, all white and black, he might be the blot on the rear wall. An Irish widow-woman? Did he mean her mother. Could it be a woman, already white-haired, would re-marry? This! When things looked most promising. . . .

As if he had said nothing at all, the innkeeper bowed polite and pointed to the bar at the left where baskets might be laid. Then, dancing, he crossed the room and went out the back center door. . . . She turned left, toward the untended bar. Gritty, the plank floor with its long-dried mud. Littered, the bar—whips, guns, umbrellas, candle-boards; unwashed glasses, filmy with liquor and finger-prints, sat plain in the noon-light from the windows behind the bar. . . . Shoving a lantern aside, she slid the baskets on to the counter.

Now when she turned about, she would face right and see this man the innkeeper had spoken to. . . . With one arm slung over the back of the split-log bench and with both legs stretched out, he was big and wide-sitting. . . . Perhaps there was some other widow. . . . As she reached the door, there was her mother pushing it back and holding it open for Aunt Ellen and the children; everyone but her mother carried things.

"One basket left," said mother to eldest daughter, "get it."

Her mother might have brought it in, easy enough. . . .

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As the girl went out, she saw the wagon rattling north and the luggage left lying around on the grass. Round from the kitchen leaped the Frenchman to help Uncle James. . . . The innkeeper poked a fat finger in Uncle James' ribs, while Uncle James looked surprised and stern as a Trappist.

"Monsieur Lannon prayed for an Irish widow," the host declared, "and the good God sent Mrs. O'Mara."

What did her Uncle James think of that? With her basket lifted, she stopped to stare at her uncle. . . . No word did he say. Was he overcome, like her? Or did he think his sister was an answer to no one's prayer? . . . Surely he would hate a stranger in the house, though he might be too meek ever to say so. . . .

As she turned back toward the house, the meddlesome man was behind her. She held the door open for him since he carried a load on his shoulder. Down on the floor near the bar, he slammed the box; nearby, her mother searched for something in the willow baskets. Rising, he spoke to her mother:

"Madame, I like it that the people of my house are known, one to the other. Behind you, Monsieur Lannon waits to meet you."

Chuckling, the host watched the Lannon man jump from the back bench, stride across the room, shaking the cold gray stove in the sand-box as he came. . . . Her mother bowed, cold and polite, but there was a look in her eyes like the new man was a bit of meat on the butcher's block, and she figuring

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on it. . . . Broadcloth, he wore, and he was fatter than those who must work hard.

"I'm waiting for my daughters," he said through his big brown beard. "We came here from Vincennes; now they're out of the convent, we'll settle here."

Just as he spoke, the two daughters opened the second door in the wall to the right. . . . Behind them was a wooden walled staircase. . . . Nice enough they were, though frail-looking; their arms, bare beneath puffed sleeves, had less shape than stripped chicken wings, and their collar-bones, showing plain above the round-topped blue cashmeres, were covered by stretched skin only and no flesh at all. . . . Mary Ellen stared at the embroidery on their pantalets as though she wanted to copy it. . . . "This is Agnes," said the man, "and this is Jean." As he named them, they bobbed their heads, and their ringlets jumped up and down.

The door banged till you thought the glass in the sill would shatter. Men came in for dinner: One with knives in his belt—a trapper? One with canvas apron—a trader? . . . The girls, who knew everybody, said the one-legged man was a writer who'd ridden horseback all the way from York state. . . . Now a giant sat on the puncheon bench, jerked off his boots, pattered to the shelf to the right of the back door, and chose a pair of slippers from the pile there. . . . Others stamped to the deal table between the two doors on the right wall. . . . Here they splashed water from tin pitchers into tin basins and fingered up soft soap from the

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near-by dishes. . . . How black the suds turned! After they rinsed their hands, they washed the dirty water over their faces and beards. . . . Eyes all screwed, they felt for the soiled towels. . . .

Clang sounded the dinner-bell! Outside the front door, Mrs. DuBois swung the bell till you'd think all Chicago heard. . . . What a rush to the dining room on the right. . . . The man with the crutch went fastest because you can step wider with a crutch. . . . For the newcomers the host was waiting; at the head of one table, he placed her mother; then he pushed Lannon into the chair at one side of her, and hee-hawed. The Lannon girls sat alongside of him. Across from the Lannons were aunt, uncle, and the children. . . . The host sat at the head of the other table, and, as he looked at the food, he rubbed his fat stomach. . . . But before he could eat, a voice called through the window near him:

"Bridge is out of order. People want you to ferry 'em across."

The host sliced a leg off a roasted chicken and said no word at all.

"But—party's in a rush."

"But—I'm ver' busy; I keep tavern like hell."

"Just a few minutes——"

"Oh, come in and have a little *quelque chose*."

What was *quelque chose*? Many things were on the table—fried bass, roast duck and chicken, ham, hot cornbread, maple

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syrup, melty butter that had black flies caught in it; already the green oilcloth table-cover was greasy and crumbed. . . . Perhaps these girls with their education would know about quelque chose. But they were talking to Mary Ellen, and shaking their heads backwards toward the other table, never once looking around.

"Find the one with the blond hair," said Agnes, her eyes bright. "He's the son of a New York banker, and he's asked me to the dance tonight."

"Look at the one that's a little short and wears glasses," begged Jean before Mary Ellen could spy out the blond. "He's a medic from Edinburgh, and I'm going to the dance with him."

"What dance?" asked Mary Ellen, excited.

"Here. Tonight. And you've got to come because there won't be near enough girls to go round."

Mary Ellen squealed like a little pig, the way she did when she was glad. . . . Her older sister thought, "This is a wonderful place for everybody." . . . Looking about her, she saw workers, educated folks, rich people, and all equal like the Declaration of Independence said. . . .

That night, branches of trees with thin new leaves on them were nailed at the ends of the bar and over the doorways of the tavern. Whale-oil lamps cast a yellow-gray light through the room, a light not strong enough to keep the moon from shining in squares on the floor. . . . All was ready for the dance . . . except Mary Ellen. . . .

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"Oh, I can't dance," she protested, her voice squeaky-high; then she made as if to run up the stairs. The Lannons rushed after. They could spare their pains—nothing but an act of God or her mother would keep Mary Ellen away.

"Anyone with two feet can do a Virginia reel," Agnes told her.

"But we just came, and we don't know anybody," objected Mary Ellen who was like to know everyone by his first name before the evening was up.

"Everyone in this town has just come," returned Agnes.

Was the whole town here? The Lannons, "Yes, and more beside."

The men in gray with red sashes were voyageurs, back from the Missouri; they were passing on the river, and when some one shouted to them about the dance, they shot their canoe up on shore and ran in. . . . That was the biggest man in the world, the one with the broghans and the linsey-woolsey coat that had buttons placed high at the back of it; he was the editor of the weekly paper—it wouldn't be out this week because the paper rolls were stuck in the mud somewhere between Niles and Chicago. . . . That girl with the white bent-over shoulders was a Southerner, and the gray haired man was her father. . . . "Look at the woman with the glass beads round her neck, the neck of a turkey," the older O'Mara girl exclaimed to her sister. . . . Those men with heavy boots were harbor workers. . . . A fort officer wore a blue uniform with gold-fringed epaulets. . . . What

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faces painted on those Indians—yellow and red crescents like big grin wrinkles. . . .

Cutting through the crowd, the banker's son came for Agnes, and the young doctor, for Jean. . . . For them? The whole floor to choose from! Such choosing, with everybody watching, made you feel hot and as if you'd like to run off. . . . The men who were left cried out to DuBois:

"We want partners!"

DuBois shook his stubby hands at them, but he wasn't mad at all. At once he left by the back door and soon returned calling out as loud as he could:

"Regardez, messieurs!"

He stood to one side and bowed as if the Queen of Spain and her daughters were soon to come in. . . . Everybody fixed eyes on doorway, and Madame DuBois and her three kitchen girls, all red and smiley, entered. Quicker'n you could say Jack Robinson, the girls were snapped up. . . . Through the front way, someone ran in and shouted:

"They're coming up Lake Street."

Like one man almost, the crowd rushed out to welcome the guests of honor—a couple, new-engaged, a daughter of a Pottawattamie chief and her man, a postal clerk. Now the crowd backed into the room and cheered the advancing couple.

The Indian girl held her head high. Even in that short black dress and those unshaped beaded leggins, she was stately. But the young man, he was flustered as a hen in a pond. No wonder. Men were calling out:

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"Haven't got my invite to the wedding yet, Watkins."

"Not going to leave me out, are you, Watkins?"

Worried, the postal clerk flapped his hand in the air for silence; then he explained:

"Thought I'd gotten round to everybody. Had fifty cards printed this week and fifty more, Monday. Didn't I, Jim?" He spoke to the big editor who grinned yes. . . . But the calls commenced again:

"I want to go particular."

"You'll let me in, won't you, Watkins?"

Then the Indian girl, calm beside the nervous little man, said:

"Why not invite them all?"

When the hurrahing died down, DuBois got up on a chair behind the bar and cried:

"Take partners!"

Like a ball of yarn being untangled, the people went from a bunch into two straight lines; one line was all men; the other, part men, and part girls. Even Aunt Ellen was up because she was too gentle to refuse the urgings. But the girl's mother sat on the puncheon bench with Mr. Lannon; was she finding out if he was rich?

The voyageurs, with no time to waste on a dance without partners, were off to "paddle another pipeful," and then DuBois began to play. Oh, what dance in those fiddle strings! People began to laugh and clap their hands and tap the floor in time to the beat. As they did so, they bent and twisted so

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they could see who were the leaders in the lines, to count when their turns would come.

"First couple," called DuBois to the music, "forward and back!"

As she watched the bowing couple, Aunt Ellen's cheeks were pink.

"Second couple, forward and back!"

Mary Ellen clasped her hands and sighed relieved:

"Oh, I can do that."

"First couple, *dos-à-dos*." . . .

Here was a town! No nabobs here!

This was the place for them, for James.



Rising winds from the west hack through the logs

CHAPTER THREE

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED THIRTY-SIX

PITCH black, and yet her mother already called to her from the bed across the room. . . . Yes, she would get up—she would—though a whole sky of cold and darkness pressed through the cabin down on her, though the warm breath came cold from her nostrils. Yes, she would get up—she had risen—she was in the kitchen where the stove glowed and the coffee boiled.

“Jane!”

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Again the name. Why, she was not up at all. Now or never—covers off—shock of cold—blind feeling for clothes—trembling fingers—icy porcelain knob—kitchen window white in the blackness—west wind that knived through the chinks in the logs.

A wraith of warmth floated in the room. Clank of opening stove door, gray-red of banked fire, wound in the stabbed coals, leaping flame of kindled wood, scuttling of coals on to the flames, all these came before the heat. . . . Hard it was to get up, but there was triumph in making a fire on a day like this.

Out of the numb darkness, life to the house. “Winds from the west, rising winds from the west, hack through the logs. We can fight too. Out of the blackness, I have brought life to the house.”

The bright morning sun reflected from the snow through the west window and filled the room of brown mortised logs with soft light, light streaked with the bacon smoke of a breakfast long past.

Aunt Ellen’s eyes were red, no doubt of it. . . . And all at once the girl feared, wondering would she lose her Aunt Ellen, her ally. She thought, “If Aunt Ellen would smile, I would not be afraid.”

At the end of the long deal table to the left of the window, Mary Ellen washed the dishes, and Aunt Ellen dried them; the water wouldn’t stay hot, and a rim of cold grease circled above the water. . . . Even reminding Aunt Ellen about

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the pioneer who had a dog named Nine Waters did not make her smile—the pioneer always told people his dishes were clean as Nine Waters could make them.

With mittens on his hands and a black wool shawl about his shoulders, young James sat at the center of the plank bench behind the table and recopied his exercises for the school, the one across from the Fort; people said James could stump the master. . . . It was too cold and dark for him at that place at the table, but where else could he sit?

At the right of the window, between the window and the stove, her mother sewed on her new black silk dress of a weave so stiff it could stand alone. Again she was in a hurry to change the first profits into clothes, but what did fine feathers matter as long as James stayed at school? His sister would be glad to work her fingers to the bone if only he could get his book-learning. . . .

Up the ladder on the center of the opposite wall she swung, up through the square-cut hole. How cold and fusty! That slit of an east window made a light so blinding that it blackened the rest of the room. . . . Mattresses sagged as if the sleepers had dug into the warmth as far as they could, and when the mattresses fell, the burlap beneath them must be tightened. So she must twist the bed-screws that wound the rope that held the burlap. . . . Would her stiff fingers crack? Now she must rise slowly or she would bump her skull and catch her hair on the rafters. . . . Water in the pitchers? Frozen solid. . . .

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"Jane," her mother said while the girl still clung to the ladder, "you and Mary Ellen might be after walking part the way to school with James this morning. Then you can cross the bridge, get the coffee, and rent me another book. But mind, no book that has poor people in it."

Coffee? They wouldn't scrape the bottom of the sack for two days, and the book was not important. Asking them to go on errands on a day like this looked as though her mother wanted to get rid of them, so that she might talk to Aunt Ellen about something. . . . She hoped the words would make Aunt Ellen smile again. . . .

But cold and all, it would be fun to go. Her mother reached into her reticule and to her daughter gave a Spanish piastre, a York shilling, and a piece of scrip written with the words, "Good for five pounds of coffee—Smithson." What mixed moneys in the West!

Once outside, they felt the sharp air needle their lungs and the bright light glue their eyelids together. With the wind behind them, the going was not hard. . . . Only one set of wagon tracks, but foot and hoof prints mingled in the middle of the road. Some of the scattered houses had sidewalks, and some had not, so walking at the side of the snow-covered road would mean stubbed toes.

James yoo-hooed at Agnes' house, but there was no answer. In the brown logs, the front frosted window was like the white spot in the eye of a blind horse. Agnes liked her new home, but missed her sister who had married too and gone farther

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west. In the spring, Agnes would have a baby. . . . Bent till they could not see his face, a man came toward them; his right hand held a pail of hot coals; his feet shuffled up a cloud of snow.

What were the bells for, and the shouting from the river? The sounds came from down near the bridge. Now they could see two red-tasseled carioles with Thenardier's French pony harnessed to one, and Hanchett's Mississippi roan to the other. Inside were men fat with Canadian furs and covered with buffalo robes. They were going to pace the horses on the river. "Run fast, horses. It's too cold to watch." . . . Here was the bridge where they would part from James.

"Good-bye, James, and don't open your mouth as you get near the lake or the dampness will go down your throat and make you sick."

There would be better schools soon; now there was only a stable turned into a school, with store-boxes for desks. . . . How the wind swept down the river! "Hold to the railing, Mary Ellen; pull yourself across." . . . An Indian with his blanket dragged close about him, dodged into a dram-shop on South Water Street. . . . On to Lake Street, and a little west. Not a wagon to be seen! This was the place. "Snow is in triangles across the square panes."

How the stove in the store pulled you to it! About it, other people rubbed their hands or their ears and talked:

"Three of Gale's hens frozen on the roost."

"Young cow of Markham's stiff in the stall."

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"Wolves getting thicker."

"Martineau saw a bear."

As he ground the coffee, the merchant made the cold place smell of some warm country. . . . The bright bolts of red and blue flannel, of striped ticking were good to look at today. . . . There were some new black wool stockings hanging from a shelf that were straight up and down in the length of them; once the shopkeeper had said, "It's a poor leg can't shape its own stocking."

Then, quick, a blast of cold air. A man banged the door behind him. His eyes looked so wide and starey that everybody stopped talking.

"Bosworth, out hunting," gasped the new man as if the words were bloody tissue torn from him, "and found a woman frozen to death—on the prairie. She'd fallen with her head toward Chicago. Coming for food, maybe."

Without any words between them, the girls fought their way home against wind that whipped their shawls open and cut their necks between bonnet and shawl—sharp as a guillotine, French king beneath it. . . .

No one to help against the West Wind but yourself and God. When the woman stumbled, had He been asleep? He seemed to leave her for the cold and winds to kill. . . . When they entered the house, their mother, her fine black sewing on her lap, looked up and said:

"Put those things away; I have something to tell you."

As soon as the coffee and book were in their places, the two

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girls stood before their mother like children ready for a lesson. . . . Aunt Ellen sat on the plank bench against the wall, and though it was dark there, her eyes showed red.

"I'll marry Mr. Lannon when Thursday is a week," announced her mother, matter-of-fact as could be, and all the time keeping at work on the silk.

"Mother!" burst out the older girl, while her sister opened her mouth more surprised at the protest, perhaps, than at the news. From the bench, Aunt Ellen shook her head. The girl's mother snapped up her eyes from her sewing, and said sharp:

"'Twill be best for all of you; he's rich so's he could buy and sell us ten times over." . . . Again a warning head shake from Aunt Ellen. . . . Why did the woman on the snow and Aunt Ellen seem one and the same? . . .

Gray weather it was that day when they went to the church for the marriage. Unpainted frame, steepleless, with no bell, the church was just a plain clapboard house, except that it had bigger windows than other houses.

Inside, by the dull light from the windows, you could see the rough boards of the unplastered walls. Benches, no pews, and just a linen-covered table toward which the white-robed priest was facing. At the little rail between the benches and the table, knelt her mother and the stranger.

At a wedding, everyone was supposed to be gay. Uncle James looked like a funeral. . . . Now they straggled home in pairs, up to the bridge street, across the bridge. . . .

LAKE FRONT

She was with Aunt Ellen, sure help in strange times; Aunt Ellen would always——

"Perhaps I'd better be telling you, Jane," Aunt Ellen confided, while she looked straight ahead and her niece could not see her face because of her poke bonnet. "Your uncle holds there is no need of him here now there's to be another man in the house; so we'll stay with Agnes a while and be leaving in the spring."

The suddenness of her words made the girl stand stock still.

"But you'll stay with us, Aunt?"

"I—he'll be alone the rest of his life unless I go with him."

"Oh, Aunt Ellen! You wouldn't leave us. You love us best, you know I need your help more than Uncle James." They were children in the house of a strange man and woman, while he was strong and could shift for himself. What would Mary Ellen and young James do without their aunt? More than their mother was their aunt to them. Then the thought of young James put an idea in the girl's mind, "Oh, I guess I understand. I would not want young James to go off alone. . . ."

Through their two shawls, the girl felt for her aunt's hand. . . . Afterwards she wondered if the words or the touch had made her aunt want to part with only truth between them.

"That's not all, child," her aunt went on. After a silence, she spoke at last, "If I tell you, Jane, it's because I want you to know always, that I never wanted to leave you children of my own free will."

LAKE FRONT

Free will? Who'd forced her? Her sister? The child's mouth tightened. These two gentle good things who had done so much for the whole family bowed before her mother's wish as though it were the will of God. . . . Her aunt turned and saw the girl's hard face.

"But you must not hold what I say against your mother, nor speak of it to her. You must promise me that."

"What did she do?"

Her aunt was not to be put off:

"Jane, I won't tell unless——"

"If you make me promise, I will."

"She said we could see there wouldn't be room here any more."

And that was the way things were then. If she was to help Mary Ellen and James, she must face her mother alone.



*Like the Devil who took
the Lord to a high
mountain*

CHAPTER FOUR
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
FORTY

BLUMP! S—s—s! went her iron hard on the damp shirt. “Why shouldn’t I take him?” asked Mary Ellen as she cocked an eye over her darning.

A great puzzlement the girl was, and no mistake. . . . If only Aunt Ellen were here! . . . Surely it seemed the child didn’t love the man; whenever the little wizened-up

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suitor came, Mary Ellen drew back her head and looked at him from under her lids. To her sister's notion, Mary Ellen loved Jerry, the blacksmith's helper, but the wedding with the nabob had been promised for the spring, come Mary Ellen's seventeenth birthday. . . . Today her mother was having dinner at the hotel with the little man's parents—they were on their way back to Philadelphia after a visit to their silver mines in Mexico—and she would come back swollen-like with pride that her daughter was to marry rich and fine. . . .

If, for true, the girl loved him, then her sister would have naught to say. But Mary Ellen was a girl who liked to please the people round her and make them smile. When she acted bold, as she did sometimes, it was because her acting so drew laughter; there was no boldness in her. Since the one thing she hated most in the world was an angry word, it might be she took him rather than stand up to her mother. Yet if she hated him, wouldn't she be sad? And she was not sad at all. . . . Something you should say so that she might be sure to marry the one she loved; yet what could you tell a girl, and her wrapped in a cloak of laughter? . . . It was stifling in the room. The calico dress of the girl who ironed stuck to her shoulders. Dust pitted the west window. Since the middle of July, dust, dust, dust, and no rain at all, till now it was late September with the sun bright and the winds high. . . . Just when Chicago, gone flat after too much wild-cat speculation, needed crops most, the grain was parched to husks in the fields. . . . Perhaps, since the wind was not

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coming from the south, the door could be left ajar. . . .
“What can I say?” the ironer wondered as she banged the door open.

Outside a haze of dust whirled in the midafternoon glare. What few wispy leaves swung on the cottonwood in the front yard were gray with dust. The path to the street was a hard groove, wind-blown. The road ditch had been drunk by the earth—all but the green scum, and even the dirt couldn’t stomach that. In the spring the street had been plowed up to a fat black round; now it was sunk flat except for gray baked ruts. Passing teams pulverized the dirt and manure till the earth was gritty with dry filth. Pouf! . . . “Soon that woman will be home,” she thought as she kicked the door shut.

Blump! S—s—s!

“Is it because he is rich, Mary Ellen?”

Mary Ellen turned to her sister, and her sister, who felt foolish whenever she talked of intimate things, stared down at her ironing.

“’Twill be nice not to work so hard,” Mary Ellen answered and shrugged her shoulders, “and to have pretty clothes.”

“But——” her sister hesitated. Why was it that the things you meant most seemed least when said aloud? Why was it that matters that sounded like earthquakes in your mind were like wet powder when you tried to make others hear them? “But those things are nice only when you love the man who has ’em to give.”

LAKE FRONT

Mary Ellen made a mouth and laughed.

"Well, of course."

Pretending, she was, and her pretense opened her sister's mouth at last:

"You love Jerry, Mary Ellen."

Laughter left the child's face. Wide-eyed, she stared——

Over the dusty floor the door grated open. Their mother's cape flew in before her. Then she slammed the door behind her to shut out the wind that had taken liberty with her best clothes. At once she untied her bonnet and shook it, gently, upside down. Then she hung it with the cape on the door, peeled off her mits, pulled them flat, and patted them into a square. . . . Whatever Mary Ellen had been going to say would not be heard now. Her mother was like a jar to the oven, bread rising in it.

In the dark corner near the door, her mother's silk dress shone blackly, her gold chain flashed, her white head was thrown back, as she grew ready to tell them of the wonders of her visit. . . .

"The jewels of the woman!" You could feel the lust in the woman's mind as it thought on wealth. "When they were down in Mexico, his mother bought them cheap of a Spanish grandee. Made by the royal jeweler in Madrid they were, and shining till they'd blind you. All kinds of precious stones put in the shape of fruits—pears, grapes, cherries—and she with not just one piece, but a whole set, tiara, earrings, necklace, bracelets, and stomacher."

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Dry wind rattled the stove-pipe that led up through the wooden chimney. Burnt crops. The year without a harvest. . . . No fruits but jeweled ones. . . . And this woman laying them out before the girl to get her. . . . Her mother was like the Devil who took the Lord to a high mountain and showed Him the kingdoms of the earth. . . . Only all her mother tempted was a little girl who liked to please. . . . The older girl lifted her eyes, bold, toward her mother and wondered, "Shall I tell her what I think?" But telling would only make Mary Ellen marry the man quicker than ever to get scenes done with. . . .

Seeing dispute in her daughter's face, the mother grew large with anger till there was no crease left in her bodice, till her lips were like the smooth side of a seam, till her eyes were determined as—Lady Macbeth's. . . . Last winter at Mechanics' Hall, a great scholar from Boston had talked on Lady Macbeth and called her the Masterful Woman. There, near the door, stood another Lady Macbeth, though she had committed no murders except of dear wishes. . . .

Her mother turned now and swished into the next room to put her best dress away. As careful as could be, it would be placed in the half-sheet in the bottom drawer of the dresser. . . . She left the door open so the girls could not talk free. . . . "Don't you remember, Mary Ellen," thought the older sister, "you believed a girl should marry for love? When I had those four proposals, you said, 'They're the kind of men who want a strong back and a weak mind. With your

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mind, you wouldn't be happy with any one of them. Wait for a man that loves you.'” . . . Then last year, during the Black Cholera, they talked with awe about real love. . . . When the shacks of canal and harbor workers were filled with stench from bodies blackened with disease, stretcher-bearers had come to a woman's cabin and said, “We will take your husband to the pest-house.” The pest-house where everyone died! Straight in the doorway the woman stood and defied them, “You'll not take him but over my dead body.” Afraid they were and went away, leaving the woman to cure the man. . . . That was a woman, and that was love! . . . “You yourself, Mary Ellen,” thought the girl, “you agreed to that.”

Mary Ellen had begun to take the clothes off the line to put them away. Suddenly with her arms full of fresh things, she turned and bent over the ironing board. As she looked up at her sister, a tear that grayed the scorched ironing board dropped from her eyes. Yet she laughed a little and whispered:

“Won't I look grand in a stomacher?”

There was no making out the girl.

It was hard to help her so.



*A red petticoat! The sign of
contempt for the "old woman candidate"*

CHAPTER FIVE
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
FORTY

MARY ELLEN took up a post near the door. There was a big autumn moon and stars bright as Spanish coins. Did she want to look at them, or did she wait to see the nabob pass, and he a leader in the procession?

No, her head was not up to the stars, nor west toward the

LAKE FRONT

promised route of the procession, but—queer enough—east toward the weeds in the vacant lot. Her cheek curved as if she smiled at some one out there.

"That's right. Wait for him, Mary Ellen," urged her mother, who sat near the lamp with her back to the door. "And don't forget to wave when he goes past."

"No, mother," answered the girl with a catch in her voice. Was it a catch of trouble or laughter? Since the hot day they had talked together, Mary Ellen had held her sister off. . . . Mary Ellen. . . . And now James, he not having been at home to his supper that night.

"'Twill be the biggest procession this town has ever seen," Mr. Lannon said as he sat on the plank bench and pressed his shadow against the cabin wall. Sometimes his wife and he said good words for the opposing side because that was wise for people in the pay of the general public. Though, surely, there was no need to smile for coins now; the railroad was to be laid down this street and soon her mother would be rich past her best dreams, past her knowing, perhaps. . . . Things were like that here: Old John Purcell of South Water Street had someone count up the money Purcell had made in land, a million it was; "My God, Quigg," he gasped, bewildered, "that's a lot of money." . . . But for every dollar gained, her mother wanted another one.

Soon that parade must come. . . . Never through all the country had there been such a campaign—every paper said that. And Chicago, far away and all as it was, was rowdier than

LAKE FRONT

all the rest. . . . What did that matter, as long as people could say who their ruler would be. . . . The city was cut in two, with the Yankees and Southerners stopping their fights to support the Whig candidate Harrison, while the Irish and other workers came out solid for the Democrat, Van Buren.

Tonight near the Tremont Hotel—had young James gone there?—the Democrats would have their say; Douglas would speak—Judge Douglas, the Little Giant.

"The harbor workers won't let the Whigs pass in peace," declared her mother.

"Why wouldn't they?" asked Mr. Lannon, as he pulled his beard till the lower lip showed red. "Won't they be one and all at the Douglas meeting?"

"No. Three harbor workers and Jerry, the blacksmith's helper, were along the road this day," remarked her mother, lifting her left hand to the table and tapping her points. At the mention of Jerry's name, Mary Ellen tilted her head listening. How quick she was to hear his name! "They looked first to one side, then to the other. Plain as could be, they were planning something."

"Where to buy a lot, maybe," suggested Lannon easily.

Mary Ellen's shoulders laughed.

Jerry buying, with scarce a penny to bless himself with!

Was that the parade, with those far-away shouts, and jangled cow-bells, and squawking horns, and banged-on kettles? . . . Mary Ellen did not seem to hear till her sister roused her in passing. . . . As they hugged themselves against the cool

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air, the family rushed out past the bony shadows of the cottonwood tree to the wooden sidewalk. . . .

Toward the west, flat places whitened by the moon; above, the blue of the sky, all starred; in between, the black of the trees. Against this blackness, orange torches smoked, the greasy things. Now out of the tree shadows swayed the high yokes, the curved horns, and the broad noses of the oxen.

"Thirty yoke to drag the dray with the cabin on it!" exclaimed her stepfather with scorn in his voice, as if, come opposition, his anti-Whig feeling galled him. "Pity they couldn't be put to some good purpose."

"One—two—three——" counted Mary Ellen as the pairs of oxen lumbered by. She had taken a stand on the east of the sidewalk next the vacant lot. When the cabin came, she pointed at it so hard you would think she was trying to get people's minds off some other things. . . . Why had she looked into the lot so long? There seemed to be no one there.

"Oooh!" cried Mary Ellen. "See the hickory tree at the corner of the cabin and the two stuffed coons stuck up in the branches! There they are! A barrel of cider before the door! And did you ever—the latch-string's out!"

Men and boys, all out of breath, ran along the edge of the procession, jumped the road ditch, joggled the people on the walks. Horseback riders paced by, and most of them sat their mounts as if poured on. All but the silversmith! He clung to his high pommel like it was the first rock after shipwreck. Now the coming band struck up. Horses pranced.

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"Stick on, silversmith." Whup! His beast was over the ditch.

"Horse sense, not to stay with the Whigs," muttered Lannon.

What a marching air! Mary Ellen marked time and edged toward the vacant lot. . . . Now came a great wonder under the moon! Six gray horses pulled a big flat wagon with the government yawl dry-docked on top of it. The band was in the middle of the boat; you could see the brass instruments flash.

And at the prow! There was Mary Ellen's nabob dressed up like a ship's commander. For all the world like the other little man, Napoleon, his right hand was thrust in the coat that covered his puffed-out chest. Something he lacked to be Napoleon. Was it the chin? . . . He forgot his pose to sweep off his hat to Mary Ellen.

Would she wave? Yes, her hand was lifted. Her left hand, the one near the lot. She held a handkerchief in it, and of a sudden it dropped down. . . . Just then, the big dry weeds to the east of the house moved as if they were alive. They were! With men! Crouching shapes dogged their way to the road. Black with them the place was, and before the older girl could so much as exclaim, the figures leapt out on the white road and surrounded the yawl. . . .

They swarmed up the sides of the dray. They stomached themselves over the boat rim. Music snapped off. Scuffling, dodging, punching, and cracking of blows, but few cries. . . . Black arms in the air, and about the front mast, the fighters formed a peak. Someone had shinnied part way up the mast. He was big enough to be Jerry—and had fastened something

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there. What was it? A red petticoat! The Democrats' sign of contempt for the "old woman candidate," a red petticoat.

Barely was the skirt nailed than the Whigs from the first of the procession headed by the men on horseback, cried, "Rescue!" . . . They came like mad to save the yawl. . . . Invaders, their job done, jumped from the boat and scuttled back the way they had come.

"Easy scared!"

"Not hard to make a Democrat turn tail!"

Shouts like these sounded above the noise of the procession as it pulled back to order. . . . The nabob rose again at the prow, his hat awry, his chest flat.

With their minds on the retreaters, the Whigs had not noticed that at half-mast still fluttered the old red petticoat. . . .

Lannon pointed. . . . Mary Ellen looked demure in the moonlight. Had she signaled the men in the weeds, signaled to Jerry? Or was she sorry for the nabob? If she wouldn't tell, she wouldn't. . . . The air tonight! What a frosty tang in it that made you quiver as if something was about to happen to you! What was it? More street fights! Or something new to the world? . . . "Tush! Keep your mind on things. Watch out for Mary Ellen, and where is James at all?"



*This would be no two-
man fight, but twelve to one*

CHAPTER SIX
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
FORTY

LANNON pointed at the petticoat banner and laughed out loud. As soon as Lannon laughed, a man lurched out the fag end of the procession, stumbled across the road ditch and onto the sidewalk till he faced Lannon.

"Laugh at the Whigs?" he hiccoughed. Stragglers closed

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in to see the fun; a last horseman wheeled his beast, dismounted the other side of the ditch, and grinned.

"Didn't the dam' Irish come through here, too?" he asked turning shakily to the stragglers.

"Yes, you're right," yelled the little crowd.

"Not for Harrison, are you?" The drunken man thrust his shaggy face at Lannon, who lifted his upper lip and snarled-like.

"Say y'are if y'are."

Bulge went Lannon's shoulders, and his arms elbowed out.

. . . A two-man fight would be fair enough.

"Didn't Harrison beat the Indians at Tippecanoe?" This the Whig asked with an air of "Let's reason with the man." Then he flopped his arm in the air and cried to his followers, "G'im the campaign cry."

Loud the answer:

*"Tippecanoe,
And Tyler, too."*

"You didn't join in," his sigh was reproachful-like. Then suddenly he cried angry, "Here's western won't vote for western. Teach him how to vote. Got a blanket? Throw him up in blanket."

Haw-haw went the men, and looked about. Who had a blanket?

"I got one," called the rider and bent to unbuckle the belly-strap of the saddle so he could pull out the robe.

Would they toss old Lannon up? All those men against one!

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Watchers jumped the ditch. . . . In the moonlight, Lannon was bent forward like a bull ready to charge. . . . This would be no two-man fight, but twelve to one. . . . Before she knew what she was doing, her hand shot out to a hard arm near her.

"Don't let 'em do it!" she ordered.

Who was he? . . . She looked up. . . . A stranger to this town. . . . Young. . . . Tall. . . . In sailor hat and cloak. Their eyes met. . . . Kind his eyes were, and gay; they laughed. What fun in laughing under the moon! . . . Almost she forgot that she asked him, but he nodded quick, and jumped in front of Lannon; then he called out in a deep voice that beat in waves through her, that beat with her heart and became one with her pulsing blood:

"The Tremont! On to the Tremont!"

The Tremont? That was where the Douglas meeting was. Did he want to break it up? Small chance—it would be too big. At any rate, his cry was like a gunshot for turning their attention. Facing east in a hurry, they repeated the cry:

"The Tremont!"

Slipping the blanket under the saddle again, the horseman snapped the buckle, mounted, and galloped away. Surely now the drunken man was sad as he dragged himself after and whined and threatened: "Aw please put him in a blanket. . . . Come back here, damn your hides."

There on the sidewalk, Lannon shook his fist after the

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Whigs, while Mary Ellen and her mother tried to pull him in the house again. . . .

The best thing was the young man had not gone. . . . After all the sounds, the prairie had gone still, once more. . . . Only the young man and she were left on the curving world. . . . Her eyes on him, she walked slowly back into the spreading oblong light that came through the open door. . . . Blue eyes. . . . Red bristly curls under the dark cap. . . . Frame that could heave a helm, come rough seas. . . . Footsteps light as a girl's, and she timid. . . . Why had she walked from him, when there was great peace in having him near? . . .

"May I come back some time?" he asked as if he feared she would say no.

Words were always hard for her; they meant so little. . . . The white moon above him. The stars—there was shining up among the stars. You could feel the world turning. In the whirling dark before things began, God conceived this man for her. This man, from the hand of God. Oh, that she could kneel to him! Oh that she could touch the hem of his cloak, kiss it, and pray him to come back to her!

Forgetting Mary Ellen, forgetting her brother, James, she said, "Yes."



She would have to order from the water cart next day

CHAPTER SEVEN

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED FORTY

WHAT a soft glow in the brown room! Drawing a long breath, she looked about from her seat on the bench near the wall. No such glory had been in this room before. Then she saw Mary Ellen, opposite, looking under lashes at her sister, and smiling, as if she said: "I know. You hear within you, 'He is the one.'"

How could the child realize, her with two men, and in doubt? . . . Oh, if she felt like this towards one or the

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other, let her speak up and take him. . . . Had the others noted the young man? They said nothing. Was the passing of the men along the streets still in their minds? . . .

Snap of the door latch! Her heart leaped up as though the young man might be back again. Where had her good sense gone to?

In walked James. . . . Ashamed she was that she had let him go completely from her mind. . . . His dark eyes were important. . . .

"Tell me," ordered his stepfather as he rose at once from his place near the wall, while his shadow got up behind him, "were you after trailing that drunken lot of processioners through the streets of this city?"

What was the matter with the boy? Most always he was ready with his tongue, but now, before he could answer, he had to wrench his mind from some matter he liked better than his stepfather. At last, he answered:

"No sir; I was listening to Judge Douglas." At that Lannon sat down sudden, as if most the anger had gone out of him. The boy went on: "He said Van Buren ought to be elected because he wants each state to decide its own business."

As soon as he mentioned Douglas' name, he took fire-like. He swelled up his chest and sunk his chin into his collar; when next he spoke, he threw himself about like a prize-fighter. That was the way, said the Easterners, that Douglas talked. Yes, James thought he was Douglas, now, and that his listeners were the Douglas crowd.

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"Do you know what the Whigs want?" he asked as he stood, lean and tall, his black hair thrown back from a face that was clear without color. Then he leaned forward as if to say, I'll tell you: "To have all the power at Washington." As he slowly rose, he kept his brown eyes on them—for all the world like a real orator—and demanded, "Then what will happen? This: Washington won't have any more interest in Illinois than London has in Ireland. Illinois——" he pointed to earth with his left hand— "will have no more power to govern herself than that ill-fated island." With the last words, he flung his right arm toward the east.

But now that his speech was over, James seemed to remember that he was not a big statesman yet, but only a boy who had not been home for supper. . . . His stepfather spoke up short:

"Get along to bed. Never go out nights without saying where you're going; mind that, James O'Mara."

Why was Lannon's voice not harsh at all? Maybe because James had been with the Democrat. . . . When the lad mounted to the loft and lowered the hatch, Lannon's red lips pushed back his gray beard, and he smiled at his wife and said:

"Did you mark the rolling voice of him? What a preacher he'd make!"

Swift her mother raised her head. She seemed to say, "Are you mad, man? The schooling will cost mints of money just when he's old enough to help. How can children be a man's best investment if they run up great bills instead of working

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for their parents? . . . Yet, a priest in the family would give us, among the Irish at any rate, a standing that we don't have now. Perhaps——"

"If he'd be a priest now," Lannon went on, "I'd find him money for all the education he wants. What do you say to that, Mrs. Lannon?"

Her mother dropped her eyes piously, and asked:

"Who's to stand against a vocation?"

Mr. Lannon's right palm slapped the table. He said:

"I'll see to it tomorrow."

Everything as good as decided, but all without James. Had he ever felt a call to the priesthood? . . . That night, how had he pictured himself as he stood before them, statesman, lawyer, preacher? Statesman, she thought. . . . Statesman, it was. She knew through her love for him. He might not be sure yet, being young. He might say, "Yes, I will be a priest." She'd let him, knowing he would get his education so, but there would come a day when he would tell them all, "I have no vocation." What would Lannon and her mother do then? Whatever happened, no matter what it was, she'd stand by the boy.

C-c-c-c! Her stepfather wound the Connecticut clock on the south wall. . . . It was time for her to jump up and uncover the water pails on the bench near the door to see how much she would have to order from the water cart next day. Mary Ellen wrapped a second red table-cloth about the big pan of buckwheat batter for fear the frost of the night would

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kill the rise. Her mother lifted the lid of the stove, and the red shone on her face; then she threw the darkening ashes on the fire.

Glad she was that she'd met the strange young man, but troubled about Mary Ellen and James.



*Horses strained
and splattered
mud to no avail*

CHAPTER EIGHT
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
FORTY-ONE

HE, THE sailor, Michael Moran, was there in the church behind her; she could feel his eyes on her.

Before his boat had left in the autumn, he had called, and her mother had been stiff and proud before him, he a plain sailor only. Her mother had said as soon as the door had closed behind him, "I hope you'll never take a poor man as long as you can stay in this house and be sure of eating your supper." . . . "Aye," the girl returned, "and of cooking it, too." . . . It wasn't that she minded hard work. To herself the girl said, "She knows I care naught for wealth. Why

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then should she stand in the way of this marriage—as God grant it may be!—unless she hates to give up an unpaid cook?”

Now it was spring, with his boat in. . . . Yellow candles were on the altar table. . . . Dusty gold was the air this side the window panes. . . . From the slough at the east of the church, the mating birds called; the girl remembered a word a farm woman said, “There’s no lone thing in Nature.” . . . Her calf-skin prayer book was opened at the Vesper service; she read, “A light has risen in the darkness.” . . .

After Vespers she was to stand as godmother for her step-sister Agnes’ second child. She’d almost forgot the mite. . . . Now the service was over, Agnes’ husband edged along the bench and put the baby in her lap. . . . Sudden, her arms wanted to press the child close, close, close. What a rough whim! Let her not scare it now, new and all to the world as it was. But if she did, surely it must feel the joy in her.

Ready they were to go up to the front inside the altar rail. When a person genuflected before the Tabernacle, he should remember God only, forgetting His creatures. . . . “We adore Thee, O Lord, in the sacrament of the altar; do You see the sailor there behind me?” Some old woman shuffled up to the altar rail, keeping the church side. How old women loved baptisms! Like fairy-tale hags that gave first christening wishes, they hovered there—a dumpy squaw with black braids that lay over her greasy, beaded skin-jacket and a French woman in bulky black; both of them sighed to see a baby given its legs so young. An Irish woman with a white ruche about

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her bonnet whispered, "Don't mind should the baby cry when the priest puts salt on its tongue; 'tis a sign he'll be a good man." . . . Forward came the new French priest in his white alb with the lace on it and said some solemn Latiny words that James could tell the meaning of, and he coming home from school. . . . After Agnes' husband took the baby again, they went down the aisle and out on the stoop. There the priest, and his alb off, talked with them. . . . Surely the new French priest had a way with him so he did not seem new at all; he was the same with everyone and gave as many words to the sailor as to her mother. He mixed with people more'n you'd think a nobleman would.

At hitching-post in the mud in front of the church, the team and cart waited. . . . Michael would be at the baptism party because she had got Agnes to invite him. . . . It was good they were to drive. Her mother was a stickler for old country custom, and that custom said, "A man and a girl who walk out together have announced their engagement." Driving but not walking, she could be with Michael. . . . Lannon held the reins, his wife next. On the first plank across the wagon sat Mary Ellen in between Agnes' husband and the little man from Philadelphia. . . . Only a fortnight more and Mary Ellen would be married to the nabob. On the second, she sat with Michael, and on the third, some other guests. . . . As Lannon slapped the reins, they all bowed good-by to the French priest. Good-by? Stuck fast the wagon was! Horses strained and splattered mud to no use at all.

LAKE FRONT

"Put the sailor at the helm," called the French priest, laughing. "You need a navigator."

Smooth enough the road was once they had pulled up on the new plank way on Lake Street. Horses' hoofs made hollow sounds, for there was a trough dug beneath and all the yards drained into it. That was why the place smelled so bad. . . . Some one called, "Hold your noses here."

Through the black soup they squirmed once more as they turned north to the bridge? To her mind the shouts of the joking people in this cart were far away as the swashing lake waves on the sand. . . . Along the river the spiky twigs of trees had pale green-like clouds about them. The sunset haze ran yellow through, soft as the cool air about them.

"It's nice tonight," she said at last.

"Uh-huh," answered the sailor. "There's my boat."

His ship lay quiet on the west of the bridge on a river, all gold now with brown streaks through it. . . . What a little ship, come big storms! For its weakness his strength must make up. She could feel his shoulder like iron, next to her. Oh, better than anything else in the world it was to have your own man near you!

"'Tis a wee thing surely," she told him. . . . You were a brave man if you earned your living by going to sea in that sort of a shell and, the while, you laughed like Michael. . . . Michael was his name; the archangel with the great sword was called Michael.

"Wouldn't you be afraid and it so small?" She asked

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with real wonder in her, but knowing all along he had no fear. He smiled as if he thought she was making game of him, but he had no time to talk of that; ships were far out of his mind.

Now the sailor sat closer and bent his head so no one would hear what he was going to say except her. She could smell the tobacco smoke that clung to his clothes. She could see the little bristles in his tanned cheeks and feel her hand move because it wanted to feel the prickle under her fingers. His voice trembled a little while his blue eyes twinkled and his pointed lips pushed upwards as if he made fun of his own inside shakiness. Surely if she loved him brave, she loved him more, trembly.

"The night I met you," he said, "I ran down here. The mate was on board, and he said, 'You look happy.' And I told him——" The sailor gulped as though the saying came hard. Did a little pain come before all joy that the joy might seem the greater? The thing he would speak of was his love for her. "And I told him, 'Man dear, happy is it? Haven't I met the girl's to be my wife?'" Why was it, when she was glad, that her breath came sharp as a sob in her? Then he ended, "Tomorrow night I will come to your house to ask your mother for you."

Longing she was to put her arms about him and hold him tight, not from love only but from some quick fear he might be taken from her. Whatever her mother said, her daughter would have him and no other.

On the seat ahead, her mother sat black against the sun.



It was not too late, for wagon trains were slow

CHAPTER NINE

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED FORTY-ONE

FRESH wetness of early morning flooded through the warped logs, and the dawn came in the oblong slit of a window in the girls' half of the divided loft. . . . This was the day he would ask her mother, thought the older girl as she lay and looked at the light. . . . Why was she uneasy this morning, as well as joyful? . . . Something, she believed, had roused her during the night, and hardly waked, she had fallen back to sleep. . . .

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But why should she conjure up worries, this day of all days? Her lips formed the words, "Tonight he will ask for me, Mary Ellen." But no sound came. . . . Last night, Mary Ellen had been strange, and yet the strangeness was only fully coming to her now. Was her love for Michael blinding her to all else? She could still feel Mary Ellen's good-night hug, a tight hold about her shoulders that had pinned her arms to her side; she could still feel the lips that pressed against her cheeks until her heavy netted roll of hair had touched her back; she could still see the dropping arms and the bent head. . . . Had the girl been trying to say something with her arms that her lips refused to say? Had her loneliness talked with her body? . . . Whether Mary Ellen would put her off again or not, she would speak once more:

"You're sure you're happy, Mary Ellen?"

The girl did not answer. Perhaps the sleep was still on her. For an instant, her sister listened tense to hear deep breaths of sleep. . . . Was there no sound? . . . A hollowness in her, she twisted suddenly throwing her left arm across the bed. Mary Ellen's place was flat, and in the gray light, she saw only a mass of twisted covers—sheet, drab comfort, and red crazy-quilt.

Jumping up, she ran to the loft-edge. Cold and splintery the wood beneath her bare feet. She knelt down and bent so that she could see into all the shadowy corners. No one could be there; yet she called soft, "Mary Ellen." No answer came but the ticking of the clock. . . . Why did she feel

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like a cold hand clutched her when it might well be she had gone to Agnes' house to get breakfast for her, since Agnes was still abed, feverish after childbirth. Surely Mary Ellen must be there. Surely? Everything in the world seemed all at once no more sure than a slough. . . .

Now that she was in the kitchen, she could be certain that no one was there. Fearing to wake her mother who was in the room to the left, she tiptoed to the front door. Unlatched! Opening the door, she could see by the foggy light, some dark places on the beaded moisture of the new board walk, footsteps——

“Where are you going?”

Her mother, behind her, asked the question. . . . In a voice that sounded like someone else's, a voice strange as the dawn, that queer time between life and death, the girl heard herself answer:

“Mary Ellen—where is she?”

“Mary Ellen?” her mother responded in plain sensible tone that showed she had no fear that a girl about to make a good match had gone far. “To get Agnes' breakfast, I suppose.”

Of course. . . . That must be it. . . . Yet. . . . It was not. . . .

“I—Let me go find out for sure.”

“Have sense! She's not gone far. Would you leave me with all the boarders coming in?”

The clock said half-past five. The habit of the early rush was on her. Fire that blazed in the stove, pans that sizzled with frying bass, griddle that was smeared with pork rind till

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the iron smoked blue—so much was done. . . . How hollow batter sounded when you stirred it! . . . Little bubbles in the gray-brown pancake rounds showed they were ready to be flapped. . . . Now the boarders from the east wing were coming; they scraped their muddy shoes on the doorstep; they clumped to their places and straddled the plank benches, then threw both legs under the table, while they said the few heavy words of early morning. . . .

Last stack of pancakes on the table, and she was out the door. . . . Her mother's voice boomed after her, but the girl did not hear the words, nor stop. Now she was on the sidewalk; with each quick step, the mud spurted up between the cracks and splattered her clothes. . . . At a space of wet earth the dirt was glue about her shoes. . . . Fog and mud heavied her dress. . . .

Blinking, Agnes' husband stood at the door of their house and shook his head, "No," he said, "Mary Ellen is not here, not yet."

Without a word, for no more time must be lost, the girl turned back. . . . If Mary Ellen had gone off, it was not with the nabob. Hoping that her mother would not see her, the girl ran past her own house a way. Near the open door of the blacksmith's shop, she slowed her step and walked, quiet, by. Red flare, clang of iron, sharp smothery smell of burned flesh, shaggy farm horses waiting, big leather-aproned blacksmith—all these, but no Jerry. . . . Her mother must not miss her nor suspect about Jerry, for Mary Ellen

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might not be gone. . . . To make up for the time taken to walk to the blacksmith's, she ran home.

Once inside the door, she tried to make herself take little ordinary breaths when her lungs wanted long ones. . . . At least her step-father had not noted her lack of wind, in his hurry to get ready for his drive up the north branch for fresh-killed meat. . . . And though her mother, who sat at the head of the littered table and clinked board-money into piles, looked up and down with scorn, she did not see the hard breathing.

"What will the neighbors say," she asked, "you going off in your figger?" The neighbors? Bah! They had more to do this time of day than to see those who went out of doors without a shawl. Customs meant more than children to her. Neighbors she thought of, with Mary Ellen gone——

"Mary Ellen's not at Agnes'."

Her mother grew stern, not as one who faces any last thing, but as one who grows angry at a child's prank. She seemed to be thinking, "Wait till that girl gets back——." Then, as if she must be extra hard on the girl that was present, she ordered:

"Get to those beds quick. I'll attend to her, and she getting home."

Not knowing just then what to do except obey, the girl climbed to the loft. It was easier to see there now, though the day was a dark one. . . . As she kneed her way onto the loft edge, her eye caught sight of the open dresser drawer,

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Mary Ellen's own drawer. . . . Tripping on her skirt in her hurry to get across the room, she found the drawer empty.

The girl bit her lips so that she would not cry out. She turned her head from one side of the room to the other, as if a dead room could tell what had gone on within its walls.

. . . There. . . . On the bed! Just below Mary Ellen's pillow. . . . As if it had slipped onto the sheet.

. . . A piece of paper. . . . Her hand clutched it as if it might get away like Mary Ellen; then, in six steps, she was near the light, kneeling at the low window to read the scrawl:

"Dear Jane, Jerry and me are going with the wagon train that sets out on the Rock River trail at dawn. We will be married this side of Ioway. We are going to stake out a claim. You would have said stay, so I could not tell you nor fight with mother. I'll write. M. E."

Mary Ellen, who loved to be with people, to talk to them, to do things for them; Mary Ellen out on some staked plain where there'd be no one but Jerry, and he in the fields all day long. . . . Why shouldn't she stay here, and have a wedding like other girls, and a home near her friends; why should she run through fear of her mother and her nabobs? It was not too late, for wagon trains were slow. . . . With the light cart, she might be able to catch the girl. . . .

Thrusting the note in between the buttons of her bodice, she snatched up her shawl and looked down in the kitchen.

. . . Her mother must be in her own room. . . .

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That was good, for words now would be a waste of time only. With her head turned toward the door as she came down the ladder, the girl gasped at her good luck. The light cart, ready for Lannon's trip up the north shore, stood before the door. . . . Let him take another of his wagons.

She flew through the kitchen, grabbed up her skirts, put one foot on the axle, the other over the wheel into the cart, and slapped the reins so the horse jumped. . . . Off she was to the west. . . . The thin wheels sliced the thick mud and slashed through the water, but did not sink as far as wheels of covered wagons would. . . .

Over the pole bridge. . . . How high the river was.

What was that long box riding the rough gray waters? Another coffin loosened by spring freshets from some north branch burying ground. One had come down the river yesterday, God rest the restless! . . . Straight west now.

Prairie, prairie, as far as you could see. Prairie that drew the sky to earth and muddied it. . . . Mary Ellen, alone on a prairie, sick, perhaps, and no one but a big ham-fisted blacksmith near. . . . People said some women went mad on the prairies. . . .

Smirrs of rain roughed the gray puddles, and then seemed to stop, while the place grew lighter. . . . Wild primroses, washed-out yellow in the green fields. Was the sun trying to get through?

She turned—Lot's wife turned. There it was, as pale as a shilling in a noonday well.

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That for looking back! The cart lurched, and she was almost thrown out of it. One wheel was up to hub, and the others almost the same. The horse stood still; it could do nothing. She must jump clear and push. The mud pulled at her shoes, while her long skirts drank up black water and slapped at her legs. . . . Pushing did no good. . . . Shouldering did no good. . . . By the time the farmer helped her, she had lost three sun hours.

But perhaps the wagons, too, were stuck somewhere. . . . Why should she give up till she had to? . . . The pale sun followed the trail and seemed to go west faster than she did. . . . Here was the mark of one wagon that had turned to the side of the road, and the animals' pawing showed that it had stopped. Was there a farm-house? Yes, a three-sided log cabin on the unfenced prairie. . . . Since the day was getting late, she could not follow much longer. There was only this chance of asking for news. Following the ruts that served for a lane, she came to the cabin; its fourth side was made of hide with a middle strip rolled up. Beyond the fingered greasy edges of the skin sill, she could see a woman laying a farmer's mid-afternoon snack on a table.

"Good-evening, ma'am," called the girl.

Shuffling, the woman came to the wet brown edge of the plank floor and peered out. She did not look to have much sense. Her drab hair, hazy about her head, seemed as though it had not been combed for days. Suspiciously, the pale blue eyes squinted in the flabby yellow cheeks, but the mouth was

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loose and twitchy as if, whatever the eyes thought, nothing would be done. . . . Sacking for an apron was pinned high over a gray wrapper—her form was as flat as a plank—and apron and wrapper were splotted with dirt and grease where the woman had leaned and knelt against things as she worked.

“Was there a covered wagon stopped here, ma’am?”

“Yes,” drawled the woman.

“Did you see the people in it? Was there a young girl? Brown hair and eyes, and a brown shawl about her?”

“Was you looking for some one the like of that?”

“My sister.”

“Oh,” the woman cackled, her eyes suddenly open and oily as if she and this girl before her now shared some lewd secret, “running away, was she?”

Feeling sick, the girl nodded.

“Well, I thought so,” the woman giggled, and hugged her flat breast with her bony arms. “She was so smiley. . . . Wagon stopped for a strap a long time back. Don’t expect to catch her with that shaky-legged mare of yours, do you? . . . Yes, siree. I says to myself she was running off, she laughed so. . . . Well, it is kinda fun at first. I know. I ran off.”

Wisps of hair stuck cold to her damp cheeks, the girl huddled up under her shawl on the driver’s seat and felt her skirts dank and pully with mud that would not dry. She shuddered with the little icy drafts that shot in through the folds of her

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shawl and up the sleeve of her driving arm. . . . East sky, black. . . .

The mad prairie woman had said, "I ran away." The hazy-haired woman who lived in a three-walled cabin with a hide curtain, a flapping hide that knocked all day though no one came in but the prairie or its spawn. . . . During all the lone woman-hours, the prairie, death-cold or fever-hot, would enter Mary Ellen's cabin and sit there telling her black lonely things.

If Mary Ellen had only spoken up. Or, if she could not do so, if her sister had only listened to the child's mind. Sometimes you could hear another's thought. Was it happiness or hard work that made her too dull-witted to hear Mary Ellen's mind talk? She had started out knowing the child loved Jerry. . . . All the days and all the nights Mary Ellen kept her secrets in her heart till it must well-nigh have split, but always thinking, "Better this than to have the anger of my mother."

Her mother? A chill took the girl by the shoulders and twisted her. Was her mother human at all? Surely she drove all good from her as if she were evil. . . . The catechism said, "God is everywhere." But there were people and there were places where you could not find Him. Sucking sloughs. Shuddery cold. Black of eastern sky.

At last, she saw the lights of the town ahead, orange color, close to the ground, like low-burned candles. . . . Even as she watched, some of the lights went out. . . . Now the

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dark river with a few lights shattered to bits in its ripples. The shaky pole bridge. . . . Was something the matter? . . . What made the horse rear? It plopped its feet in puddles but could not move. At the horse's head, stood a figure, black against blackness. . . .

"Jane!"

The deep soft voice she'd almost forgotten in all her despair.

"Michael!"

When he sprang up and took the reins, she could feel his hands, pocket-warm, against her cold fingers. To the depth of her soul, she was glad he was there. She was cold, and he brought warmth; she was weary, and he brought rest; she was disappointed cruel as could be, and he brought comfort; she was afraid of the strangeness of the world and the evil in it, and he—strangeness fled before him. As if to make surer of his presence, she brushed her damp cheek against his rough shoulder.

"You been a long time gone," he said, gently.

"All day."

"You did not find her?"

"No, Michael. How did you know?"

"I took a bent bar to the blacksmith the day. He told me Jerry had gone off with Mary Ellen—and you had shot pell-mell after them."

The laugh she gave sounded more like a cry. Maybe it was, but that was the great comfort of Michael—he would be glad or sorry whichever you needed; you could be sure.

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"And since then," he went on, "I sat in the boathouse near the river waiting for you. I thought you'd come sooner."

A great long hard day indeed, but with Michael at the end——. Suddenly she stiffened. "Look, Michael," she said, low. . . . The door of her house was open, and there her mother stood, her shadow falling before her. . . .

When they pulled up before the house, they heard her voice, cold as the prairie night, say:

"Come in out of that. Don't mind the mare now."

It was the kind of voice meant to bring you to your knees. . . . What for? . . . The woman stood back against the door to let them pass; her head was thrown back, her nostrils were wide, and her upper lip lifted, as if she despised them. . . . Even the sailor not knowing her ways, felt her scorning for he wrinkled his brow at her, puzzled.

When they were in, her mother kicked the door shut with her heel. With an iron sound, the latch caught, and for one second, the girl, with the weary-wild day on her again, thought, "Let me tear that latch open, and get out of this place forever." . . . But Michael—that would seem mad to Michael.

Near the door they stood, in the full light of the lamp on the table. But the woman swept to the center of the room where she turned about, and with her hands folded at her waist and her whole self held like a judge who has himself been wronged, she bent her brows on them.

"So," she said, while anger made her voice shake. "You

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come in this time of night after gallivanting all day with this sailor off the lake."

The charge in the words knocked the girl breathless.

"Michael," she answered when she could, "met me just now at the bridge."

"Did he indeed? . . . Mary Ellen, you—all these things to come on one day to a woman building up good fame——"

A cry leaped in the girl's heart. Always this woman came first to her, never her children. Good fame meant so much to her that customs broken meant morals gone; that's why she scorned the two of them. . . . What did the sailor think now? . . . His eyes were hot as he said, hoarse:

"Tonight I came to ask you could I marry Jane after Lent is over."

"When Lent is over?" The woman's voice rose, mocking. "It's tomorrow morning you'll marry her."

A chill shook the girl like the chill on the dark prairie. Then, like a kerosene flame, a heat leapt through her. Here was Evil in human shape; yet she would stand up and speak her mind full and free at last. Then she would go, and be forever free.

With deep breath drawn, she bent from her waist, her eyes on her mother's. . . . Had she been silent so long that her mouth was locked? . . . The words were in her mind, but her mouth would not say them. . . . Her nails dug in her palms. . . . Her whole frame shivered with the will to utter, but no sound came. . . . Why,

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then, did her mother fall back a step? . . . Did her eyes say what her lips would not? You bought your fine clothes, but you left us unlettered.

Her mother's hand passed over her gold chain and held it fast.

—you used my uncle and my aunt, and drove them out.

The chin of her mother rose in the air, and her eyes glittered steely.

—you got your nabobs, but you lost your daughter.

Across her breast, her mother folded her arms.

—James and me are left. You won't touch him; you won't touch me nor this love of mine.

Did a shudder seize her mother, her finding silence worse than sound?

The girl touched his arm; then she clicked up the iron latch, the first noise since her mother's words. . . .

Forgetting it, the girl left the door open. As she went toward the street with Michael, she could feel her mother coming behind them, stopping at the threshold, filling the strip of light with her shadow.



*Swing out
over black waters*

CHAPTER TEN
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
FORTY-FOUR

THE lake lapped the sand. . . .
From her gardening, she could look up across the blue water
to watch for the boat due this day. . . .

Her mother had never come in body to see her at this
place, but the home was not free of her presence. . . .
When the first child grew ill and died of the child's plague
then running through the town—even then, her mother had
not come, but to a good gossip she had said, "It is the judgment
of God that the child died. Its mother defied the superiors
put over her by Heaven."

As to the defiance, well, true enough. That night she had
come back from looking for Mary Ellen, she would have gone

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to the ends of the earth with Michael and asked no shrift of parents, place, nor priests. . . . But without her thinking where they were going, Michael had led her to the French priest's door, and knocked. . . . First, when the priest asked her to go home for a little space, she shook her head till the fireplace before her seemed to grow wide. "No," she had exclaimed. "No, no!" A little space, he urged, was not long in a lifetime and it would give him time to see her parents and publish the banns. . . . "'Twill be better," he said, quiet, "to go back again and part this time in gentleness." . . . When she had looked up at Michael, he too seemed to ask her. James'd be the same. So little they realized her mother. . . . Yet, as she had listened to the priest—and she could remember nothing of what he said, only the sound of the rise and falling of his voice—a sort of understanding had come to her: There could be evil in people, and they, perhaps, under some spell they would want as well as you to be rid of. . . . While she viewed her mother helpless, a pity had come in the girl's mind. . . . And at last there seemed a Presence in the room that saw into her eyes and made her feel hot and ashamed for so great hate; then she had said, "I will go." . . . Though the Presence seemed real enough then, where was It in her home? The only spirits there were those of them who'd left the place. . . . As for herself, she seemed a servant-stranger only, working with a woman who let her stay there only because the priest had so ordered. . . . Sometimes, it

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seemed the silence must smash like glass. . . . You could say with your mouth and your mind, "I forgive her," but your heart snapped, "You lie!" . . . Then the space of time was gone at last, and the wedding, as the French priest planned, took place with her mother and stepfather present in the church. . . . The judgment of God that the child had died? . . . This starey sun! Perhaps with the new child in her, she should not work so long in this white heat. . . . No. God was not like that. He had not killed the first-born for judgment, though her mother might say so, claiming God for her side. How could she, when evil dwelt in her, and evil, in some dark way, had made the child die. . . . Oh, there was no reason now that she should think on such hating things. . . . Why should she twist the Devil by his tail? . . . Maybe she'd even pity her mother the day James would tell her, "I'll be no priest."

Flowers were hard to raise in this sandy soil along the north shore, but with the black earth she had lugged from inland and placed in a strip along the south wall of the house, they were doing well. The climbing nasturtiums made a bright show; the orange blooms were halfway up the door to the west and the window to the east; scarlet geraniums grew in clumps along the base of the cabin. Would Michael notice the stones she had picked up along the shore and used to outline the garden strip? . . . Their one-room cabin with its lean-to was the least sort of house in the cluster of shacks in the Irish harbor-workers settlement, but it was a sanctuary

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for him, and he coming back over the rim of the lake. . . . To tell the truth, she was grateful her mother had not set foot here—'Twould be sacrilege of a sort. . . . Not kneeling to the love in the place, she would scoff at the pooriness that was there: The bed was smooth beneath its blue and white spread, but it had only a straw mattress. The Franklin stove was well blacked but second-hand as the dents showed. The table was pumiced white, but not a new thing at all. . . . Her mother's rich air would say, "How do these houses come, ten-a-penny?"

Way off to the northeast, was that a speck on the blue shining waters?

Michael would be home soon now. Michael. What a queer humbleness she felt before him, till she might have forgotten she had any worth at all except for the odd little ways he needed her care. Once she had found him circling a stocking hole with thread and drawing the thread tight. That was what he called darning. "All sailors sew," he said. Sew, did they call it? With them handling a needle like a crowbar and a spool like a capstan?

The speck was growing large and black. It was his boat.

Within their own door they were, his arms about her. . . . When his hold loosened, he looked into her eyes as if he could see all that had happened in her mind since he had left, down to her hate of her mother and her black judgments—though such thoughts were faint when he was there, she feeling his protection. . . .

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Her fingers touched his red hair. . . . Laughing with joy at his presence, she thought at the same moment, "Why should he ever leave me?" Though that was a foolish question, at least she might ask him when he would go off long again. The query in her mind, she feared to ask it, for that would bring them to future things, and this best present time of his return would be gone forever to the past. . . . True though this was, she felt her hands slide down his rough sleeves till she held his hard fingers and heard her voice say:

"When will you go off long again?"

He moved his hands over hers, smiling:

"In September, but I'll be back for Christmas with you."

At the child's first Christmas.

"With us," she said, smiling but a little tired. Surely he'd seen.

The grasp of his hands tightened. . . . Her weakening body cried out within her its gladness to feel his strength. . . . She swayed toward him, and he kissed her forehead softly while her too-loving, too-hating heart rested in his tenderness.

As October came on, the little snatches of sumach along the dunes were every leaf red. Blue with piled white clouds was the sky, and the sun was bright as though it refused to leave the world to winter. A light surf only on the water. . . . Every night she prayed good weather should continue, and every day in October the sun shone, and the lake lay smooth and sparkly. Even in the last two months of the year, though the sky was often overcast, the gray lake was quiet.

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One afternoon about the middle of December, James came to see her, unexpected. He had been to his parents to tell them that he had no vocation, and they had told him that there'd be no more college. . . . There was nothing to show that he minded not finishing, except that he turned, sudden, and strode up and down the room. . . . As he reached the west wall, he found himself before a shelf with a few books on it; over the backs of these, he passed his long white fingers in the same loving way DuBois touched his fiddle. . . . Then, with the singing sound that cloth book makes against cloth book, he pulled out a lavender-brown volume with sprawly gold letters, *Memoirs of Robert Emmett*. . . . Facing her, he thumbed the pages, and at last read aloud a little, the while she thought, "You have two minds, one is on your reading and the other, on your college." The reading was about the hiding of Emmett in the cockloft of a public house with the British in pursuit. Backed by his men, a red-coat officer, stood on the first step of the loft, but the woman of the house had said, "Oh, sir, don't go up there, or you may fall through and be killed." So he had not gone up, and Emmett had been saved. . . . All of a sudden, James thrust the book back and began walking with long steps about the room as though the thought of a great man had pricked him like a spur. . . . As well as if she were her brother, she knew the desire for big deeds was on him. . . . And surely you could feel a flame in him that, fanned, might leap up and light far places in the world. . . .

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Though it was not her way to promise without seeing her way clear—a promise was an oath to her—the words said themselves without her, “I’ll help you get college, James.”

It was that night, after James had gone, that the winds and the waves began to rise. . . . She rose from her chair near the table, where she had sat knitting the scarf for Michael’s Christmas present. Passing the stove, she went around the end of the bed that, covering her eyes against the light, she might see through the window into the darkness. Like white teeth, the wave tops gnashed.

Z-z-z-z! The hissing of the wind grew louder. . . . For those who go down to the sea in ships, O Lord! . . . An iciness chilled through the room. . . . Extra wood on the fire. . . . The blanket drape for the window was in the bottom drawer of the dresser on the south wall. After slipping the curtain on its wooden pole, she placed it at the top of the low window. . . .

But just that blanket could not keep out the whistling of the wind nor the lashing of the lake. . . . From the biggest waves, spray pelted the logs behind her. . . . She counted; it was every third wave seemed big. . . . In the troughs of such waves a wee small freighter dipped. . . . On the freighter, a sailor bent against the knife wind, slipping on the frozen deck, climbing a mast that swung out over black waters. . . .

Another picture came that made her rise from her place. . . . Whatever happened, she must not let her mind see

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such things again. There were other things, that would take her attention more than knitting: when she had taken out the drape, she had seen Michael's old brown wallet; just to touch it would make him feel close to her again. She brought it to her place at the table. . . . The brown skin was smooth; it squeaked when you squeezed it, and it smelled of good hide leather and tanning. . . . Within was no money—that was in the sugar-bowl—but there were three letters from his people in Ireland. Once he had told her to read them if she felt so minded.

One of these she took out of the wallet, and carefully lifted the fold of the foolscap to which still clung bits of red sealing-wax. Then she laid the letter flat on the table, smoothing back the turned-in edges of the paper. Trying to forget all but the words before her, she read:

My Dear Child, we have received your long and wished for letter. After the lapse of twelve month which we all thought you were not existing but thanks be to the Living God that you are in good health which is a lenthing to our days. . . . If you take my advise you will come home and do not run the hasard of your Life any Longer in that wilderness of a contery what is the worald to you if you take sick far from your friends. . . . Dear Michael, I hope this Letter will rech you you are in a very dangres employment which makes us all very uneasy. . . . I have one remark to make to you that is that on the 6th of January there did a great storm arise that leveled houses and tore up trees out of the earth and there was a great many vesals lost on Sea the Ded bodys coming in for a long time—

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Quick, she slapped her hands over the letter as if they could blot out that picture. Was it everywhere? Then she lifted her hands, and with trembling fingers, put the letter back in the wallet. After she had placed the wallet back in the dresser, she found herself slamming the drawer tight shut. . . . She must not be imagining things, but putting the place ship-shape, man o'war fashion, and going to bed. Near her pillow she placed the big bell she had to warn her neighbor in case of the child's coming, and under the pillow she placed the midwife's fee. . . .

Her lips all pursed up to blow out the candle, the flame warm at her mouth, no breath came. . . . Without the light, wouldn't the wind's shriek be more eerie, and the lake's boom, stronger? . . . Was she a child, then, or wife to the man who was fighting wind and water with his bare hands? . . . Quiet came the puff from her lips, and the light went out. . . .

For a long time, she lay in her bed and tried to say a rosary for him. But the words died on her lips and in her mind as she listened, listened, listened, with her head light on the pillow. . . . What good in her listening? . . . Nothing but prayer could help. . . . She pinched each bead of the rosary so the hurt would keep her mind on her prayers. . . . "Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."

At last she dozed. Then, early in the night, she started up from her bed with a gasp that tore her. Terror gripped

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her in its hands. . . . She had dreamed, only, and dreams weren't real. . . . This was real, this blanket rough beneath her hand. . . . Now as she grew surer of her surroundings, she told herself shivering, "Don't fear dreams."

But so near to truth did mind-sight seem in the darkness that she rose to light the candle, build the fire, and sit by the friendly red gleams till the white light of a quiet morning rayed about the edge of the blanket at the window. "Don't fear dreams," she said more firmly, now the light had come.

With force she put all the strange visions of the night aside, and went about her work; practical things, she thought of, like plans for the birth of the child. Winifred Culhane would come to her. Winifred's cheeks were snow-apple red, her back was as broad and strong as a man's, and her words were full of good common sense. . . . As the day went into early darkness, the girl clung more and more to the thought of Winifred, her health and muscle and sense.

Come dusk, a knock at the door. Never had neighbor been more welcome! The girl hurried across the room to unlatch the door. At the threshold stood a woman whose shawl hooded a white face, hollowed by shadow. Slow and even like a ghost walking, she entered the room and stood silent. It was only the next-door woman. In her hand there was a covered plate of some delicacy but she did not seem to know how to offer it nor what to say. . . . Well, the girl had words that tumbled from her mouth so glad was she to be rid of them:

"Oh, it's good you've come. I had a terrible dream last

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night. Michael, I saw in a shipwreck; in rough black water he was, his arm round a spar. He was calling my name——”

The neighbor's eyes were circles of terror; a cry strangled in her throat; her dish fell with a crash; she turned and fled from the room. Behind her, the door banged, and then swung there, to and fro.



Clark Street, at the public square

CHAPTER ELEVEN

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED FORTY-FOUR

IN THE white storm on the black waters, Michael had gone down. . . . No, this was no judgment of God. . . . She could see the storm before her and in it was her mother. . . . How cold it was in this place! How plain she could hear people scrunching on the walk. . . . When had she opened the door?

Many women with fear in their faces were coming into her house. . . . What were they afraid of? For she knew the great thing and all they could tell her now was the time and the place. . . . Winifred Culhane was with them. . . .

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Why was it when her mind felt the need of great rest, her body would give her none? . . . Now Winifred was sending all but three of the women away, and the girl had to laugh a little so much did Winifred seem like some big farm woman shooing chickens out of a house they had wandered into. . . . One of the three was the little old woman—of Connaught—who chanted prayer at childbirths.

Why should Winifred be so cross to her, saying, "Can you give us no help at all?" . . . Chant and yellow light and spasms of tearing pain, they were in a whirl together. . . . That chant she knew, where Christ spoke to His Mother and said:

*"O Mary, succour this woman
Who is in fear of death."*

And Mary answered, sharp:

*"Succour her thyself, O Son,
Since it falls to thee.
Baptism for the birth
And bring the woman safe.'"*

Everyone was gone now but Christ and His Mother. In a gutter He stood and held a great heavy cross away from His shoulder for His mantle was jagged upen there, and below in the flesh was a raw splintered red bloody wound. His eyes—His eyes were like Michael's till Christ seemed Michael and Michael, Christ—looked at His Mother, she pressing close to Him. Clasped were her hands, and they were saying to Him, "Pain in my body is less to me than pain in Yours."

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Love, love, love for the Son of Man, it was in Mary, it was in her. . . . A soldier stumbled on the end of the cross and the angle hacked down on the red bloody flesh. . . . Above the jagged pain, their love for each other. . . .

Light from the snow outside flooded up white into the dark places of the roof above her. In sleep a great peace had come on her. . . . Worrying words could not break it. . . . They came to her, the neighbors, and said, "There's small money left in the broken sugar-bowl. Your mother says she'll let go the cook and take you back? What is there else for you to do?" . . . Though the young mother could not answer yet, she put her arm about her child as though she would protect it, and, clear, to her mind, came the promise she had made to James about his schooling. . . . If she went back to her mother, they'd all be under her mother's will—James, the baby, and her. A promise it was she'd made to James, a promise she would keep. He'd have his chance in this town.

By middle January, she rented the main room of her cabin to a widow-woman, while she herself took up quarters in the lean-to. And by that time too, she had found work, finishing trousers at the top and at the gaitered ends for a Jew tailor on Clark Street. . . .

Now that she had begun her new work, the dark came all too soon, her wanting to burn daylight and not candles at all. The widow in the big room had a light—you could see the streak beneath the door. . . . "You don't mind this place,

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do you, child?" she asked the baby on the bed; "Christ was born in a stable." . . . There was a small mound on the dresser; that was James' wash, ready to be brought to him at the new St. Mary's of the Lake university. Between her sewing and his tutoring, they would get him through no matter what. . . .

When she came to take the trousers back, she found the bundle heavy, but she had her strength again and was glad she still had people she loved to work for. . . . A thaw had melted the snow; then there'd been sleet and weather below zero. Puddles were ice now, and the wind snapped glazed twigs down to the ground.

As she crossed the Clark Street bridge, she stared down at the cakes of ice below and the dark water between them. The sight made her think of Michael; the tears froze on her cheeks, and she caught her lips to keep down the sob that came with the old prayer, "May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace."

The city was blurred, her looking at it, but she blinked the tears out, saying, "Michael, dear, pray for us." Then the city got clear again, and she felt better seeing it only. . . . Covered-wagon people on their way through here often scorned this place out loud, said it was good for an outfitting point only, declared they wouldn't take a quarter-section for a gift.

Now she'd got to Lake Street, she could see down to Michigan where the big twenty-five foot reservoir rose above the ground; its iron pipe went out 150 feet into the lake, and its steam

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engine pump sent water through bored logs to Chicago homes. . . . Would the places these wagon-folk were going have improvements like that? . . . And now the panic years were over, work was opening up here: Just this year, Wadsworth and Dyer, out on the south branch, had packed the first tierce of beef for the foreign market—you could get the dirty salt taste of slaughter-houses even in this cold air. And just outside the town, farmers begged for hands to mow grain and husk corn; last year only, they had to turn cattle out in the ripe fields, all for lack of men to hire. . . .

At Randolph Street, she walked west, taking the center part that was already roughened by horses' hoofs; there was less chance to slip there. She watched a merchant come out on the wooden platform in front of his store and throw garbage into the road; two black grunTERS found it, rooting for dainties. Against the law for almost two years now, letting hogs run in the public streets, but with nothing fenced in, it was hard enough to keep animals at home. "The whole place is like a common," said the people from New England. What of it? A common was better than a walled estate, wasn't it?

Plenty of balloon frames on Randolph; people from other towns called this building, a house on a platform above the earth, ramshackle. But such homes were just the thing for this locality; they had no cellars because basements here became just water-holes, and though a balloon-frame might look frail, every part of it was spiked together and held tight against the worst of the prairie winds. . . . Back in '35, there had been

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no spires showing above the trees, but now there were, and often the churches beneath them were made of brick or stone—St. Mary's, which was on Wabash and Madison, was no log cabin now, but a stately place with a porch that had Greek columns on it. Rush Medical College, over on Dearborn and Indiana, had a dome like the Pantheon in Rome. There were even some residences that had had architects to plan them out. . . .

Here she was at Clark, at the public square with its one-story-and-basement courthouse; brick it was, with four big windows along the side. Since Henry Brown had led out some volunteers to plant trees and put up a picket fence, the place looked better. That was the way here. People gave services as free as could be. And money too. That last crowd of immigrants, starved in the Irish famine, had scarcely entered the town before Chicago subscribed several thousand dollars to give them a start in life. O, this was a city where every man was given his chance!

Aye. It was not the lake, the river in the shape of a wavy T, the country roads diagonaling in from rich fields, nor the square blocks of scattered houses that made this town. It was the people. Of course, there were some like her mother, close, out for themselves, and let the devil take the hindmost, but they were overbalanced by the others; James, he had the making of a true Chicagoan. . . . What if the city did look rough, and the people too. They were real; they cared for things that mattered. There was no place as fine in all the world. . . .

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She went up the stairs to the tailor's loft. In the reek of the wool, damp under the hot iron, she stood, a little breathless while the small man with the black skull cap and the grizzled beard bent over the trousers and looked with care at the finishing she'd done. . . . At last he said, "What you sew this fine for?" . . . Let God bless him. That meant she could work faster and make more money for the boy and for James.

PART TWO



*In the muck
of the road
below pigs rooted*

CHAPTER ONE
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
FIFTY-FOUR

IF JANE could only be here today. Charley Freeman and he would hang out their shingle, and if his commencement day had brought tears of joy to her eyes, today would mean even more.

He'd write her everything. Letters were all she would take in payment. While Charley and he were working as scriveners

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in a law firm, he had earned enough to pay her, but she had refused him, saying that she and her boy Michael had enough to get along on now.

And of course they had, for, in order to secure the boy's future, she had married a second time. She found that sewing brought in only an uncertain income, that slack seasons cut in on savings; so, at last she had married a Welsh farmer from down Aurora way, a farmer with two sons who needed to be looked after, a farmer with two hundred acres of black Illinois soil that would mean sure food, at least, for Michael.

Jane, thought the young lawyer as he sorted out the drawers of the second-hand walnut table they had bought for the new Clark Street office, Jane had always understood. She had realized how he felt about not wanting to be a priest when he had no vocation, and she would know now how he felt about the Freemans. She had already said old Freeman reminded her of her mother. Of course he was the poor member of the firm and glad enough to get a start here; Charley, backed by his father, the Senator, was the rich partner. Should they try to dictate opinions and acts to him—why should they want him to be a Fusionist like them—why should he join with that lot of Whigs, and Know-Nothings, and disaffected Democrats when he was still strong for Douglas? Why should Freeman Senior urge him to cultivate men who could give cases to the new firm, to stay away from the unmoneyed and uneducated?

That would mean he would have to stay away from his own

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people. But should he worry about insinuations? He'd wait for an issue.

Now that the table was in order, he strode to the front of the office and opened the center of the three front windows. Charley perched on the table and watched him make ready to put out the heavy black and gold sign, "Freeman and O'Mara, Attorneys at Law." . . . He paused for a moment at the window—the view was strange enough for a city office.

Though the building was only seven blocks straight away from the courthouse, it was almost out in the country. In the muck of the road below pigs rooted, grunting as they poked their noses in slops thrown from neighbors' shanties. Fat, round cows ran from a herder's pointed stick, jogged north toward homes that waited supper milk. Was the beast with ribs that stuck out like the laths of a corn-crib, a waif from some Texas herd? Across the street were tar-paper shanties and other sorts of hide-aways which were built on floors laid direct on top the muck. Beyond these was the flat gleam of the river, and beyond the river the red fires of the last Pottawattamie camp; these fires were grayed by the haze of the late spring afternoon.

A rough town in a raw country? Well, that was all that some people saw. For himself—suddenly he caught his breath, sucked in his lips to keep them from trembling with emotion—for himself, he saw a God-like place. Before Chicago, as before God, people were equal. Chicago believed in democracy, Chicago had given him and most of the rest their chance. If

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it had not been for Chicago, where would he have been? Dragging kelp from the Atlantic to fertilize a stony brown field in Donegal? Migrating for work to an English farm and living in a dark damp Paddy-house? Saying "Please sir" to some New York master? . . .

Of course, there were odd, here-and-there people like the Freemans who wanted to create caste in Chicago; there were still others who were jealous of the quick advance of newcomers like himself; members of the Know-Nothing party, for instance, wanted to down the foreigners, the Germans and the Irish. However, most of the people here didn't ask what a man was; they were with Douglas, defied the Know-Nothings, and asked fair play even for "dirty foreigners." . . .

Douglas stuck to his friends in spite of opposition. . . .
Douglas championed the Irish. . . .

With vigor he lifted out the sign and whacked in the long nails that would hold the iron arm of the sign in its place. The sound rang far, echoed. . . . Just as his job was nearly through, a man with a hairy face slouched along in the street below; now he stared up vacantly. Why it was that fellow Kearney again, Kearney, the drunken Irish inventor who'd been dogging his footsteps ever since it had become known there was to be a "Freeman and O'Mara" firm. Kearney, it was said, had a big case against Matthis, the railroad man; Kearney muttered continuously about Matthis, the railroad man, stealing an invention from him, about Matthis throwing him out of work when his wife lay dying. As he looked down

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on the pale, hairy face now numbed with drink, the young man thought;

"If you've got a case, Kearney, speak up! I'll take it."

Pulling his head in from the open window, he straightened his six-foot-two, shook the black hair out of his eyes, and spoke to his partner, saying, "Kearney's still hanging around." Charley, on the walnut table, felt about the crackly bundles there till he found the glass tobacco jar; then he leisurely thrust in his pipe and thumbed dry brown leaf into the bowl. After lighting the tobacco, he lifted gray eyes, sucked in his pink cheeks, heaved shoulders fat beneath the bright blue coat with the velvet collar. At last, he puffed out contemptuously.

"Oh, Kearney's cracked!"

But wasn't everyone who disagreed with Charley, cracked? . . . Charley looked—so fat—so settled. The real reason he didn't hold with Douglas was that Douglas used to take his coat off when he talked in Congress and "threw himself about like a prize-fighter." . . . But why must he always return to the differences between Charley and him? He shoved the hammer on the table, marched across the red carpet, and turned on the water in the marble washstand in the corner. Brown fishy water gushed out, and he thought, "I'll write to Jane we even have chowder piped to our rooms." . . . Charley had twisted toward the stove. In the darkening room the glow showed faintly on his face. But warmth came from within too. The eyes shone, the lips worked about the pipe stem. At last he spoke.

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"I'll bet," he declared, "I'll bet the Senator could get us Matthis for a client. Railroad work! And all the big guns are in it. Lincoln, Thomas, and the rest. We must get Matthis!"

Work for Matthis! What had made him think of Matthis? Oh yes, the conversation about Kearney. . . . And he, himself, had been thinking of taking Kearney's case. . . . No need to worry about one or the other. The firm would probably get neither. . . .

He crossed the room to the back wall, knelt before the bookcase of nailless dove-tailed mahogany, and muttered, "At \$2.50, Charley, this was a great bargain, second-hand." But Charley still chewed his pipe and looked into the fire. Did he dream of big cases, goldbacks, and fame? . . .

Still kneeling, his partner pulled out the tight drawer at the base of the bookcase with such sudden strength that the skull, placed for decoration on the top, rocked and teetered. Then he took the drawer over to the stove at the south wall, drew up a walnut cane-bottomed chair, and placed the drawer back-end up, between his knees. After that, he thrust a pen-knife into stove embers, and at last began to scorch letters into the wood of the drawer. Very slowly, he burned in the brown lines, "Freeman and O'Mara, 1854." Freeman and O'Mara, firm which aided poor people to get their chance, to take their right places in a democracy. . . .



*A white face
circled by a
dark bonnet*

CHAPTER TWO
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
FIFTY-FOUR

CURIOSITY seemed to make Charley break the silence, slide from the table lounge toward the stove, and look at the lettering on the wood. He scoffed, "History!"

Then shrugging his shoulders, he said something about a promise to get more books, and at once left the room. . . .

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The other put the drawer away. The darkening room was very still now. Dusk made him lonely. Standing at the window, he saw that the gray was suffused with yellow kerosene light from one of the little shanties below; a man cut across the prairie, toward the light, going home. . . .

The watcher had had no home since his mother had returned to Utica, to spend her money, to ride in a carriage, to patronize those who had once scorned her as "one of the ignorant Irish." . . . No, no home. A boarding house room, instead. . . . He'd been right to turn from the priesthood, for he was not born for celibacy; he wanted his own home and his family inside it. But he knew well enough he must not think of marriage or even courtship till his firm was well established. He owed that to himself, to the girl, whoever she might be, to Jane. . . . Not even parties—Why, who were they?

As he looked out of the window, he saw two ladies; their wide swaying skirts were light colored against the black road. They picked their way, one after the other on the planks laid down for a walk. They were not women of the shanties, for wrappers and shawls were the wear there. Why were the two way out in this part of town?

They neared the office building; they could not be coming to it, for none of the rooms were rented except this office. Surely they could not. The slighter one of the two stopped and lifted her head; he could see a white face circled by a dark bonnet. Actually she seemed to peer up at the gold

LAKE FRONT

letters of their sign. She couldn't—they couldn't—clients never came to lawyers on their first day.

Hurriedly, he glanced about the room. Much too dark. The glow of the stove was the brightest light. . . . He lit two jets on the inverted T-square of a central chandelier, and the greenish light gave an iridescent look to the red-walled room. . . . Then he swept the center table clear of papers, stuffed them into the waste-paper basket. But now the place looked too neat. A few books on the table.

However if the women were really coming, there was no time. . . . He bounded to light the gas in the outer office, and as he entered the room, he heard steps on the stairs. Two sets of steps, one that creaked and one that touched. Listening in unbelief, he let the match burn down to his fingers. . . . Nearer, nearer. The doorknob turned. The door opened, and the ladies entered.

He stepped on the fallen match and bowed. He had never seen the two before but guessed that they were mother and daughter. Both had the same blue eyes but the mother's were direct, and the daughter's, brightly evasive. Both had firm chins, but the mother held hers in such a decided way that the hair on a chin mole stood out almost at right angles. In a mannish voice, the mother spoke, saying, "I am Mrs. Fitzgerald. This is my daughter, Marie. Are you Mr. O'Mara?"

"Yes, mother," responded the girl before he had a chance to speak. "He's the one I heard at the debating club last week."

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He smiled at her, surprised. He had been judge at the club last week, but considering the topic, he would not have expected her there; they'd talked on "Resolved that the geological assumption of the earth's pre-Adamic age is supported by reliable data." Wondering why she had gone, he looked at her again and he was glad she had come through the dusk here.

"Won't you be seated in the inner office?" he asked them. Inner office, he thought meanwhile, had an impressive sound. As he led the way, he added to Mrs. Fitzgerald, "I hope your daughter was not bored. I don't want to disparage us debaters, but I can't help wondering why she came——"

"To hear you," boomed the woman. "She likes your speeches——"

"Mother!"

"Well, it's true isn't it?"

The girl's face disappeared somewhere in her poke bonnet. And the woman, with the same air of speaking out and not caring, continued: "But that's not the real reason we chose you. Nor on account of having heard of the Freemans; oh, I expect a good many people will come to young Charley because of the old man. I won't. I refuse to deal with a boy who has to rely on his father; feel I'd have to deal with two instead of one."

While the ladies sat down near the table-desk and spread their skirts out beyond their chairs, he waited to see the girl's eyes again; she would lift them soon. She must be little more than fifteen, a child, and to a child there was always a glamor

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about the people who sat up on a stage. Was he a disappointment to her now?

"My daughter and I are here to talk about a small inheritance," the mother went on.

Then she explained. Her father in Liverpool—Liverpool accounted for her English-Irish accent since there were many Irish there—had left her two thousand dollars. The Liverpool barrister wished to arrange matters through a legal man here. "So if you will write——" He would. . . . From time to time as the mother talked, he looked at the girl in a kind of astonishment, not recalling ever having seen any one quite like her ever before. Was she as lovely as he thought her, or was he grateful because she had come at dusk when he was lonely? Then astonishment seemed lost in a sense of peace and completion; his deep breaths said to him, "She is the one."

"You must come and see us," thundered Mrs. Fitzgerald.

"Thank you——"

"And I don't invite unless I mean people to come."

He wanted to promise. . . . The soft curve of Marie's cheek was pink against her bonnet. . . . But just before she had entered, hadn't he told himself he must wait for a while till the firm was established. Surely, however, the firm would be on its feet by the time a sailing vessel had got to Liverpool and back!

"I'll call," he answered, and felt the woman's eyes studying him, "when I hear from Liverpool." He thought she looked faintly amused and not disapproving.

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Reluctantly, he opened the door and waited at the head of the stairs while they descended. . . . Before they reached the vestibule, someone held back the street door for them; it was Charley, returning with one arm full of books. Why did he have to come just then; now he'd seen the girl, he'd want to meet her. . . .

But even as the other questioned him, he forgot Charley; he was thinking, "Think what a man could do with a girl like that to go back to."



*A buckboard scraped
up to the curb*

CHAPTER THREE
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
FIFTY-FOUR

THIS appointment of his with Freeman Senior worried him a bit; he had an idea why the old man had sent for him. Of course it was not on account of the failure of the new firm to do business, for the two beginners had almost been swamped with work in this boom-town. Hadn't he been thinking he'd not have to wait for the Liverpool boat to be back before he called at the Fitzgeralds? Charley had met her and was calling on her. . . .

Just as he arrived at Clark and South Water Streets, at the

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corner opposite to Freeman's office, he heard someone shout, "Hi there!"

With that, a rickety buckboard scraped up to the curb, and a great overgrown cabin boy in overalls put out a hand shiny with axle grease. No mistaking the black hair that bristled under the workman's cap, the eyes that laughed, the open blue shirt. Tim, Mary Ellen's oldest boy; he'd left the Iowa farm to work on the lakes and was often in and out of Chicago.

"You'll come to the Irish meeting tonight, Jim?"

If old man Freeman was looking down out of the window, he would probably think, "More of Jim's shanty-Irish friends." The boy had a rough enough appearance, and yet he had a glow about him, a delight in life, in the nearness of a friend, in the bigness of ideals like the Fenians' fight for an Irish Republic.

His uncle answered yes. The boy exclaimed, "Tonight then," slapped the reins and rattled away into the traffic. . . .

What did the old man want? Probably to talk about this matter of Douglas, of not meeting the Little Giant at the station tonight. Yet now that most of the city was turning against Douglas and his Kansas-Nebraska bill, friends should stand by. Douglas had championed the Irish in their need; now let the Irish champion him in his. Tonight let Douglas come back to his city, let him win it once again.

He ran up the outside steps of the plain red brick building to the first story, and then up the gritty inside wooden stairs to Freeman's office. The room was imposing—high-ceilinged,

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yellow, with brown velvet window draperies at the walnut windows, with a large white marble bust of Demosthenes in a corner. . . . His big frame padded with fat, Freeman Senior stood near a window. In the afternoon light, the snuff-spots on the old man's wrinkled vest showed gray-brown; at the sides of his vest his frock coat sagged loosely. His head was bent, and gray-blond hair fell in wisps over his forehead. Through his hanging brows, his pale blue eyes looked sharp; between the heavy lines made by the weight of the pouches of his yellow cheeks, his bloodless lips curved in scorn.

"Saw you down below. Was that another of your—friends?"

The other stiffened and answered:

"That was Tim, son of my sister, Mary Ellen."

Freeman lifted his large fat-fingered hand and dropped it, as if to say he meant no harm but why have relatives like that. Watching the heavy paw hit against the old frock coat, the other thought, "The old man affects disorder in his clothes to get the political approval of workingmen, to show he is one of them; but really he hates them." . . . Freeman pushed back the skirts of his frock coat and thrust his hands in his trousers pockets and plunged in his subject:

"I hear you're going to meet Douglas at the station tonight."

The other nodded, and the old man went on with a mildness his eyes belied:

"Well, I wish you wouldn't. You'll endanger the firm."

It was true the firm might be endangered. And, God knew, he didn't want it to be; he wished to keep on smoothly, to be

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able to see Marie, to—— At once, Freeman seemed to note the gravity of the young man and to take the opportunity of pressing home his point.

“And the people here are quite right,” Freeman’s indignation had a platform manner about it. “This town won’t stand for the Kansas-Nebraska bill; it won’t let northern territory go slave.”

Fah! What did old Freeman care about slaves? He was with the big wigs who made their money from factories, who wanted tariff country extended and anti-tariff country kept from growing. As the young man’s lips curved to show doubt of Freeman’s sincerity, Freeman observed the expression, sent a flying line of brown saliva into a cuspidor, and smiled as if to say, “I’m glad you’re smart. I like smart people and get along with them.” Then his smile disappeared and he leaned forward in grave fatherly fashion and said, “Don’t go, Jim; your friends’ll understand.”

What did he know about friendship! Up to last spring when the Little Giant began to lose popularity, he’d been fawning on Douglas. The young man faced his problem. Douglas and belief in his principles, or the Freemans and disbelief in theirs. Just then, the big walnut door of the office burst open, and a thin little man with a tense white face catapulted himself into the room. As he ran up to Freeman, he waved a newspaper in the air. Hitting this sheet with the nails of his left hand, he shouted, “We must prevent him! We must prevent him!” Then he threw back his head so that

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he could read through the small steel-rimmed spectacles that held to the thin nose at the distended nostrils. He quoted loudly: "Anti-Christ in the person of Stephen A. Douglas must never be allowed to pollute the pure air of Illinois with his perfidious breath——"

"Good-bye, Jim," Freeman broke in hurriedly. "Good-by. Come in soon again." The young man laughed to see the haste of the politician to separate two men of opposing parties, his haste in conducting the Douglas man to the hall while the anti-Douglas man kept on shouting. . . .

Arrived in the hallway, old Freeman fixed his hair-hung eyes on the lawyer. His eyes threatened, "I will not have the success of my son risked; let him who loves the danger, perish in it." His mouth simply said, "That man in there means every tap of his finger-nails, and he's just a sample of the people in this city. I tell you, Douglas will be rotten-egged by Chicago tonight. The city's through with him, and you can't buck up against a whole town."

The young man stood a moment out on the porch of the building. Early evening filmed the blue September sky above; below express wagons harnessed to mules rattled past, and two-wheeled drays blocked the passage of a carriage. . . . He looked at a city turned against Douglas. . . .

As he stood on the porch, he heard the turntable of the bridge behind him, begin to creak. He faced about to see the structure pivot and the boat appear. . . . Down the right lane of the river glided a large freighter; its flag hung heavy

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at half-mast. Curious, he leaped down the stairs and ran up the ramp-like road that led to the bridge.

"Who's dead?" he called to a sailor in the bow of the departing boat.

"Douglas!" bellowed the sailor through cupped hands. "Didn't you know it?"

Scantlings, waste paper, garbage, boiled in the wake of the vessel. . . . What a sewage smell from the river! . . . Across the green and purple water lane puffed a tug with a great mashed nose; after it, slid a scow. Tied up at sloped landings or against grain elevators opposite were more freighters, and in the darkening air, more flags at death height. . . .

Little sheds, tall elevators, five story buildings—the sky-line seemed a thing jagged out by a child's scissors. . . . The white letters of advertisements on the black granaries opposite were still readable: Red Jacket Bitters, Root and Jewett Stoves. . . . Why was a bell tolling? Too slow and solemn for the courthouse fire bell. And now the sound swelled until it seemed as though all the bells in town joined in the dirge. . . . The man, once the city's hero, was dead to it.

When the bridge swung back, a herd of cattle sidled across. People and traffic had seemed to disappear with the coming of the night. Only beasts were left. . . . Lake, as well as South Water, was deserted. . . . In the splutter of his torch, a lone boy zig-zagged back and forth across the broad plank road and clattered his lighter into the gas lamps. . . .

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He wandered down this show street with its red brick or Lamont marble buildings, its wide wooden walks yellow with light from the shop windows, its display of chased gold watches, bolts of rose silk and other rich things. But now, aside from himself, there was no one to see it all except a rat that scurried along the gutter—you could hear its quick claws. . . . Had all the town gone to the station to hiss Douglas?

Ahead of him, he saw a wooden Indian with his hatchet in air, black against the glare of the Imported Havana Segar Store. . . . Now, from beyond the Indian reeled a large figure that bulged out a tight suit; its head was bushy under a little hat. Kearney! Always drunk in this great grog-shop by the lake. To the lawyer, he stuttered. "They g-goin' drive him down this street? Well, don't let 'em."

Up to the north sky, he lifted a shaky finger: "There! See all men."

As the other noted dark figures that moved along the white coping above, Kearney added: "C-crates rotten apples, I was in alley when they brought 'em up. Don't let Douglas this way."

His eyes were big and solemn like a child's in fear, and he staggered back to a building and flopped on a doorstep as if he had no bones at all. . . . Were Kearney and he the only two friends Douglas had left? . . .

The crowds were on the Avenue. As he turned south, he thought most of the city must be parading along the west side of the street. In the gas-light that flecked through the shade

LAKE FRONT

trees, people kept passing up and down the walk. Ladies' wide skirts had swept the boards almost clean of leaves. West of the walk were turreted square-built homes, and on their verandahs, people crowded. Even on the steps of a church that looked like the Parthenon with a spire clapped to it, men and women assembled. Was she among them? Why did they watch so intently? Douglas wasn't due just yet. . . . Suddenly he realized. The street was the dividing line. Only Douglas men crossed the road to the lakefront railway station, and none were going now. Had all the few remaining Douglasites been told as he had been they mustn't buck this town? . . . Only Douglas men? He was a Douglas man. Then it was his turn now. He faced east. It was a solitary going.

"Oooh!" cried a girl, who pointed a fan at him. Someone cried, "It's O'Mara!" Well, now they knew! he'd cross the Avenue. He'd gone Douglas and she—Marie would approve.



On the lake edge lay the lighted station

CHAPTER FOUR

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED FIFTY-FOUR

ON THE lake edge lay the lighted station. Figures, about a hundred of them, moved around it, . . . this station up an inclined cinder path and road, set in the midst of waste. To the right was a large lagoon bordered on the west by pig sty and stable dumps.

Oil lamps, with their new reflectors tinny yellow against the red frame depot, shone on the men who shouted welcome at the newcomer. "Hurrah for O'Mara!" called the Americans.

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"Up O'Mara!" huzzaed the Irish. And the coachman on the Douglas barouche with six stamping horses waved his whip. . . . Once in the crowd, he heard the snatches of its talk: "Won't take long before Douglas has 'em on the other side of the fence." "—given fair play. . . ." "Change for us Democrats." "'s truth. Once we could have elected the town-pump mayor. . . ." "Lucky if we get out alive tonight." "Are they armed?" "'think this is? A prayer-meeting? 'course they're armed."

Scottan, campaign manager, took the young lawyer's elbow—he was always taking someone's elbow—and led him round south of the depot. This fat man, whose small features were minor matters centered in the rolls of flesh on his face, always whispered things that could be announced from housetops. All that he wanted now was to assign him to the front left corner of the phalanx that would be formed round the Douglas barouche. . . . To the south gleamed the double track of rails that lay on the stone crib built along the shore. . . . The plash of the water against the piles sounded soft and slow—a cool, lulling noise on a night warm as this one. . . . As they talked, a boy pulled a hand cannon round, ready for the salvo.

Yellow blur to the south. . . . Rush of the crowd round the end of the station. . . . Yes, the blur was the headlight of the Douglas train which even now walked the tight rope of the stone crib between the lake and the lagoon. White steam wisped from the chimney with the wasp waist. . . .

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Unprotected on his open platform, the engineer thumbed back to the cars and grinned. Those actions were his signs that the Douglas was aboard. . . . Stubbing their toes on the rocks between the ties, the men ran the length of the coaches; through the looped and tasseled curtain of each small window, they looked for Douglas. There he was, holding on the iron rail of the very back platform, his small dark figure rounded by the oil light from a car window.

Alertness of the lion head, captaincy in the eyes below the thick arched eyebrows, downrightness in the big nose and mouth, energy that burst from the small frame—no wonder they called him Little Giant. . . . From the hearty way he shook hands, you would think he never missed all the people that ought to be there and weren't. . . . As he descended, the crowd pushed closer. . . . A boy shouted, "Traitors round here! Somebody spiked the cannon!" As if he would spy out the scoundrels, the boy tiptoed, stretching his head above the crowd. As he looked south, you could see the flash of fire reflected in the boy's eye; you could hear him shout, "What's that?"

Everyone swung south. There, on the edge of the lagoon, kerosene flames licked the night air, lapped the water, leaped about a scarecrow figure with outstretched arms.

"Oh, that!" laughed Douglas. "That's probably me."

The boy, and others, swelled with anger and threw their weight on their forward feet as if they would run to trample out flames and fire-makers. But at a word from the Little

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Giant, they heeled as quick as privates to general. . . . Command. . . . What was it in this leader made other men's hands shoot up to salute? . . . In the orange light, they could see Douglas' lip curl, his nostrils widen, his eyes laugh, as he said: "Let it stay there. I miss those things when they're not around. All the way from Washington, I've read my paper by the light of my own burning effigies."

"Ha! Ha! Did you hear him? That's a good one!" they exclaimed and slapped the other's backs. High good humor took the place of anger on the men's faces; they formed their phalanx with the spirit of those who go to conquer. Left, left, left-right-left! down the incline toward the city. Most of the people had deserted the Avenue: to go to the hall, perhaps. . . . West, then north across the bridge, on to Market Hall. As the phalanx reached the river, the lawyer saw some men duck from the bridge shadows and dart north. Scouts, perhaps; they kept their hands clapped over their hip pockets. Said the man next him, "Watch those boys, Jim; they're quick on the trigger."

Two blocks from the hall, the marchers came plump on a mass of people who milled toward the speaking-place. . . . Ghastly green in the gas-light, green and angry with dead coal eyes, these people turned and hissed and booed and groaned and raised their fists. Shock of shoulder against shoulder as they rushed the phalanx. But the barouche? Untouched, even by the backward push, and the horses clop-clopped on to the hall. . . .

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Before the door, the phalanx halted. Men of the guard, with heads and chests held high, made a path for Douglas. Scottan, Douglas, then the lawyer strode up the narrow wooden steps to the second-story. The entrance was set between the stage and audience. "Douglas!" shouted the crowd and trailed the last letter into a hiss. With the cry, they rose and surged forward. So quick were the newcomers forced back that the men behind them had to snatch at stair banisters to keep from falling. . . .

"In the good name of Chicago, quiet!" The mayor on the stage was pale to his whisker roots; he raised his hands. Muttering, the crowd retreated and sat down reluctant on their chairs. . . . Out of the silence, the gun steps of Douglas as he ran up the wooden steps on to the stage. . . . Goss, leader of the opposition, friend of old Freeman, sat at the press table up there, and his handsome face triumphed. . . . Douglas got to the center of the stage and began, straight as a shot: "You have been told the Kansas-Nebraska bill legislates slavery into territory now free. It does no such thing——"

"S—s—s slaves!" the crowd sibilated.

From the hisses you'd think you'd gotten in a snake-pit. . . . Blue tobacco smoke layered about the center gas-jets; you could smell the acrid odor though the windows, both sides, were open. . . . "Judas Iscariot!" . . . Had the reptile sound recalled the doggerel aimed at the Douglas compromise with the South? Stamping out the rhythm, the crowd beat out the words:

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*D'ye know if the snake that made the track
Is going south or coming back?*

All the giant rose in Douglas till he seemed to grow in size to meet this opposition with his body. Above the din, he bel-lowed: "I will stay here till I'm heard."

Front rows got the words and passed them back—waves of heads that turned and heads that bent. Then through the din, the sound of growing song. Now the whole hall joined in the mocking verses:

*We won't go home until morning,
Till daylight doth appear.*

As they stopped to smile at the close of the song, Douglas boomed out: "Since most of you have never read that bill, I will read you that part that has been slandered. . . . It will be seen the bill leaves the people free."

"Save your breath! We can read!" someone shouted.

In the midst of the groaning came a few odd cheers. . . . Gray copy paper in hand, the editor Goss sauntered behind Douglas, down the steps, along an aisle. Groups circulated about him; people stood close to talk and cupped their ears to get his answers. Sometimes they glanced toward the stage and laughed. A man patted a bulging hip pocket. All the while, the Little Man gouged the editor with his sharp eyes; then Goss, his smile partly concealed with his hand, mounted the stage, and Douglas' body froze in irony. He sneered, "Your efficiency in getting an armed mob to put me down has been entirely successful."

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Goss dropped his hand, snapped up his head, shouted: "False! Every word false, sir!"

Anxious to hear, the audience hushed itself. Frock coat flying, Douglas swirled to take advantage of the silence: "It is perfectly natural for those who have slandered me to be unwilling to hear me. But I am in my own home——" When groans rose high, he thundered: "I know my rights, and though personal violence has been threatened me, I am determined——"

Waves of racket swept the hall. . . . This wasn't fair play. . . . Douglas must have a chance to be heard. . . . If he couldn't hold his Illinois stronghold, how could he keep the country? And if he couldn't keep the country, who else could preserve it in peace and democracy? . . .

Close to midnight? Still the crowd yelled. Now Douglas unbuttoned his coat and pulled out a heavy gold watch. The people, curious, grew silent. And Douglas hurled this last scorn of them, "It is now Sunday morning. I'll go to church, and you can go to hell." . . .

"Get in the rig. He wants to see you. Quick! the mob will rush us."

As he spoke, Scottan leaped up with the driver—lightly for a fat man. With the crack of the whip, the horses plunged forward. . . . The rig jumped along like a toy dog that a running boy pulls after him with a string. . . . Those in the rig braced themselves and ducked their heads. . . . Through the air whizzed the slush of rotten apples, sounded the "Yah!" of the mob.

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The bridge lay ahead. Out of his high little house at the right the bridge tender leaned. And Scottan screamed with all his might to him, "Turn the damned thing." Had the man heard? They'd no sooner reached the shore than the bridge began to pivot. The rig was on the south side. The pursuers, on the north. And the river, in between! . . .

"You see," remarked Douglas, as the slower gait of the horses let him rise a little and shake a spoiled apple from the skirt of his coat, "what a lot of rotten opposition we have to meet."

The other laughed. He liked a man who joked at the enemy. He loved this man's courage. It had championed his people.

"Tomorrow I begin to stump the state," said Douglas, "but I want speakers here. I hear you've helped keep the Irish for the bill. Get 'em all, and more beside. Will you?"

With a sharp intake of breath, the other saw Freeman's hair-hung eyes saying no—cold eyes; and he saw, too, a girl's mouth saying yes; he answered, "Yes, I will, sir." Douglas' hand shot out; in the dark, the young man felt the warm blood of the man's hand, the throb of his enthusiasm. . . .

He had been lonely when he crossed the Avenue by himself, but now he seemed to have become part of a great force that could not be beaten.



*They dawdled
like lovers*

CHAPTER FIVE
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
FIFTY-FIVE

IN SPITE of his holding out for Douglas, the firm was not dissolved. For Douglas had won his power back again and would be, people prophesied, the next President of these United States. Freeman the Elder seemed to have forgotten that he had been against the Little Giant, that he had tried to threaten the firm into being anti-Douglas; nowadays he said, "I hope Douglas will remember what we've done for him."

With business going well, with the letter from the Liver-

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pool barrister finally arrived, the young man found himself on the top of the steps at the Fitzgerald's two-story frame house on Washington Street, wondering, "Is Marie in? Has she forgotten?"

His ring unanswered, he opened the front door, village-fashion, and called up the front stairs. "Directly!" Mrs. Fitzgerald's deep voice responded; not so much as the tap of a light heel, however, showed Marie to be there.

And in this sneezy room there was no hint of her freshness; bad housekeeping—probably only another sign of the manishness of Mrs. Fitzgerald's nature. Slits of the spring sunshine came through the gray Nottingham curtains, lay across an east wall, showed the skinny ribs of laths beneath the thin green-calcimined plaster; dust accented these lath lines and lay thick along the dark carpet near the baseboard. On one side the dingy black iron mantel hung dauguerrotypes in chipped oval frames. On the other side was a wall-pocket of muddled gray newspapers and in a corner beyond was a triangular what-not hung on walnut cut to look like ribbon. The treasures on the shelves were California nuggets, everlastings under a glass dome, knuckly shells of a pinkish yellow color—the kind in which you were supposed to hear the sea and didn't.

Still no hostess. . . . In the corner between the folding doors of the dining room and those of the hall stood a megatherium, a square piano before which the Indians would have worshipped. And in the corner beyond the hall doors

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was a low marble-topped table cluttered with the *Fireside Magazine*. . . .

Now the doors opened and Mrs. Fitzgerald strode in, with the march of a man masquerading in skirts. . . . They sat in the high-backed chairs with the silly little arms and talked business near the low fire. She showed herself to be full of plain, shrewd sense; perhaps she realized her manner and her mind were masculine, for once she softened for a second to say as a sort of explanation: "Since my husband died, I must be father as well as mother to my child." . . .

"Good afternoon," spoke a light voice behind them.

Against the dark door was Marie, her chestnut hair softly rumpled and her bonnet held by its blue ribbons. Glow of the violet eyes, sheen of the smooth young skin, lift of the moist red lips—she was lovelier than he remembered. And she did recall him. And she was glad to see him! . . . He heard her mother begin to speak, and turning, saw the older woman, with eyes on her daughter as if she would read the girl's mind if she could and do the girl's least wish.

"I'll leave you two," boomed the mother, "while I make tea."

The girl's silky blue skirts puffed and billowed as she sank into a chair near the window. The sun was soft yellow on the parted hair, on the shoulder curl. She held herself erect with her hands folded, but though her attitude was primly female seminary, her eyes were welcoming. After his winter of haranguing hairy-faced men in political halls, her beauty was a sort of miracle.

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"You're getting famous." She smiled as if she were glad; he noted the clear curve of her lips. "People say you'll get what you want when Douglas gets in."

It was good to have her seem to care about his future—who else did, except Jane?—but it was odd to have this pretty child prophesying what politics would bring him—Politics? He thought of shaggy men seen from a platform and her! He laughed, then saw at once he'd done the wrong thing; her lips pressed together, and her lashes dropped over her cheeks; her voice was cold and she asked, "Won't you?"

Repentant for a moment, he answered solemnly, "It's all a game, you know. Maybe he won't get in after all; sometimes they don't, you know."

Her eagerness returning, she protested, "Oh, but he must; then you can be in—in the cabinet."

That was too much for his solemnity and he laughed again, "Doesn't being in the cabinet sound a trifle—shut in? Besides, I'm only twenty-seven."

Then she had revenge, for with her red lips round, she breathed, "Only!"

How old she made him feel! It was true twenty-seven was a great age to come to and find your hands empty of any big accomplishment. He must work harder. . . . Then the girl studied him a time, seemed to want to press her revenge, saying, unexpectedly, "I know a little about politics; Mr. Freeman talks to be about them."

"Tea!" exclaimed Mrs. Fitzgerald as she bumped open

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the door. She carried a large tray laden with many things—a spotted tea-cozy, fat over the tea-pot, assorted cups and saucers, a bread board with loaf, knife, and butter, and a plate of fruit-cake slices curling up with dryness. With a despatch that prevented aid, she clattered the tray on the piano, crossed the room to the marble-topped table, tipped the magazines on to the floor, and dragged the table, with its white casters squeaking, over to the fire. Then she banged the tray on the table. After throwing the fat tea-cozy on the floor and pouring out the steamy tea, she seemed to notice the little something of a strain in the air and said in a tentative way:

“Marie—and I—take great interest in your speeches.”

But the girl would say nothing more about politics; she chatted about her seminary, of a Girl Who'd Been to Europe, of a Girl Who Could Waltz, of a Girl Whose Mother Believed in Dress Reform. It seemed to him she talked a little defensively as if she said, “Since you think these are the only things I should talk about, I will satisfy—I'll keep big topics for Charley Freeman.”

Wondering how he could right himself, he turned toward Mrs. Fitzgerald. She was looking at the girl as if in surprise at her chatter; then her shrewd eyes narrowed, and she asked suddenly: “Don't you think the prairie's dangerous, Mr. O'Mara? Marie wants to practice with the Holy Family choir Sunday afternoons, and I tell her she shouldn't go off on those wilds near Twelfth Street all by herself.”

LAKE FRONT

Grateful, he asked quickly: "May I call for her next Sunday?"

That last Sunday in April was blizzardy.

The sun was dazzling on the snow. Crystals lay coarse on the low picket fence, on the unshoveled path with its dark frozen footmarks. The snowfall was not so deep, however, that tall grass blades didn't pierce it, grass blades and green buds on the boughs of the trees.

Bright red in her winter coat and little hat with ostrich plumes, she stood at the top of the stoop set to the left of the two-story frame and blinked her eyes against the glare; her brow couldn't wrinkle, but it puckered like a baby's. . . .

How would they go? Across the Washington Street bridge and south along the river road? . . . She almost fell at the holes beneath the snow, so he took her arm. How tiny she was! Now the child shivered with cold. That coat of hers was probably too pretty to be warm. His cape—There, that covered her, and dragged in the snow. . . .

She assented gravely to his words; so he talked on and on and at last, he told her that most secret holy thing he believed he would say to no one—that he wanted to win rights for his own people, to fight for democracy. Again and again her brown eyes looked at him, saying, "I know. I know." A man could dare anything with understanding like hers behind him. . . .

She was so young that he felt he must not speak of love as yet to her, but they dawdled like lovers, and when they

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arrived at the church all the singers were coming down the steps.

That evening, however, when she had left the room, he told Mrs. Fitzgerald that he wanted to marry her daughter, and she, looking at him keenly but in a kindly way, answered frank enough:

"She likes you best, I think, Jim, but I want to see you better established. I want her to be sure of a good income. If you can't get one, I'll give her to Charley Freeman or someone like him. You see I love her better than anybody and yet I know she's just a girl that wants things nice."

He stared at the woman for a long time. Mothers could be blind to their children; his had been. And yet, how could she be so ignorant of the response to ideals in Marie, of the unearthly inspiration in her. . . .

For a year, on Sundays, he walked with Marie to choir practice, but never till today had she shown petulance. No, there was no topic that would please her. Had she changed in her feeling toward him? Did she love Freeman better? Or had he hurt her? . . . To his words, she shrugged her shoulders or shook her Easter bonnet with impatience. . . . Generally, she had seemed pleased at some little personal thing—

"Your shoes," he protested as the small side-laced boots sank in the sludge, "are too thin for a muddy walk like this."

With her voice almost sobbing, she gasped, "How—terribly romantic!"

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Romance? To a girl her age, romance probably meant things like pressed flowers.

"Violets are out? Shall I?"

"Oh, of course," she burst out, as if he should have been about the matter long before.

Puzzled, he hunted for her flowers. From time to time, he half-knelt and from beneath the broad leaves of a plant he would pull the small blooms. When his left hand could hold no more, he rose and, since she asked for romance, he swept his large black hat from his head and bowed very low in presentation of the bouquet.

Fingers of both her hands closed over his. Then she took the flowers and lifted them to inhale their perfume. . . . Suddenly she crushed the blossoms to her lips, and as she did so, she looked up with eyes full of tears. . . . Real or imagined, some feeling caused her pain.

"Why, Marie dear," he pitied her in wonder, and as if she had been Jane's small boy, he placed an arm over her shoulders. At once, her body leaned against his; he could feel the little spasms of her sobs. . . .

How small she was! He felt iron in his arms. He had power to shield her from this and from all things. Both arms went around her, and he caught her to him and kissed her again and again. . . .

On the following Sunday, Mrs. Fitzgerald, though not granting him consent, gave him encouragement and warning.

"I like your prospects, Jim O'Mara," she admitted in her

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deep, husky voice. "But don't go relying on politics for advancement; that's too uncertain. Rely on the Freemans. The old man knows how to make things come his way."

In the manner of a lecturer, she folded her arms across her large bosom. . . . But, he thought, he might for the sake of political or other principles have to separate from the Freemans. Why did she insist so on money? Marie herself would rather have truth to ideals.

As if she read his thought, Mrs. Fitzgerald drew in her mouth till the hairs on her mole of her chin rose to right angles and spoke: "Don't be so damned visionary, Jim O'Mara."



*The clatter of
bricks, the sawing
of boards*

CHAPTER SIX
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
FIFTY-SIX

THERE was nothing visionary about his financial success; soon Mrs. Fitzgerald would have to give her consent. Everything was coming his way, even building. Outside was the clatter of bricks, the scrape of trowel on mortar, the sawing of boards. Charley, who sat at the shiny new desk in the corner of the room, was becoming paunched with prosperity; soon he would be wedged perma-

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nently between the arms of his chair, forever condemned to desk work. . . .

Silk from a prairie pod floated through the open window. . . . Next Sunday, Marie's fall choir practice would commence again——

At that moment the Negro porter put his woolly head in at the door, and talking with his lower lip, announced: "Senator Freeman's coming up the stairs."

Immediately Charley twisted about and studied the office critically; he liked everything to be just so when his father came. . . .

"Pff! This air!" protested Charley. The wind had veered to the south and drove in the smell of the shambles, of a river thick with decayed offal. Wrenching himself from his chair, Charley rose and banged down the windows.

Then the Senator entered; his step had the firmness of one who has special business to do, but his face was peevish with some late annoyance.

He began: "Kearney's hanging round that door again. Gives a bad look to the place to have that drunkard out in front?"

Charley shrugged his fat shoulders: "Friend o' Jim's, sir."

So his partner added: "Sort of shadow, sir. I can't get rid of him. I've tried it."

Testily, the old man waved the matter to one side. Then turning to his son's partner, he said: "Just saw Matthis of the X Y Z railroad, Jim, and he told me he had a case for you."

LAKE FRONT

"Matthis, and the X Y Z!" exclaimed Charley, delighted even if the case hadn't been referred to him. "Why, didn't I say the Senator would get us work with him?"

He jumped up to get the other's hat. Certainly he must be driven by strong emotion for only that would have unwedged him a second time from that chair.

"There's money in railroads, Jim. There'll be tracks from coast to coast, from Great Lakes to Gulf. Here's your hat. Skip."

In the same warning way that he had looked at his son's partner on the night of Douglas' return to town, Freeman Senior glared through his eyebrows; he seemed to say. "You've got to get this case and win it. I want railway work for my son's firm. . . ."

Outside, the sun-white air was gritty with prairie pollen and with building sand. . . . His mind on his errand, he stepped absently over the planks put up for hod-carriers and avoided the splash of lime vats. . . . If he won this case, there was no doubt but that Mrs. Fitzgerald would give her consent. . . . But Bill Matthis? One of the hardest men in town; from the beginning he had had a hard fight: a run-away from a broken home, a half-starved beggar on a country road, an apprentice under a cruel master in a blacksmith shop, a mechanic, and at last a railway president . . . head, too, of a concern that made railroad parts; he had no idea in life but wealth. . . . Stale smells floated from lager beer parlors along Clark Street. Suits that hung

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outside second-hand stores flapped limp in the warm air. The sun shone on gold letters "Why Not?" that were printed on the drawn blue curtains of a brothel. . . .

Someone was following him. He turned about and there was poor broken Kearney. . . . Here was the car parts building; here he could find Matthis. . . . As he entered the dark, set-in steps of the Matthis building, he heard a smothered cry behind him. . . . The drunken inventor shuffled forward. Eyes staring wide, he clutched the other by the sleeve, his outstretched hand palsied with terror.

"Don't go in there," he whispered with his head so close the young man smelled the fetid breath and the rancid hair. "Spies are in there. Spies! Spies! Spies!"

Had long drink made the man mad? Undoing the dirty fingers, the other soothed him, saying: "Don't get scared, Kearney. I'll be going back soon."

As he went under the shadow sharp on the staircase, he looked back at the figure—blind hands uplifted, red lips that trembled in the ragged beard and brown eyes shocked into something like sense. . . .

This north office of Matthis was dark with walnut. Long narrow windows hung with dark rose drapery admitted little light. . . . Past the windows, he could see the mast of a freighter in dock and the flash of sea-gulls that planed, now white, now gray. . . .

Between the two river windows stood a gloomy secretary with a small gold wreath at the top, then a horsehair chair

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for Matthis; it was backed by a table spread with a dark rose cover that hung to the floor. On the room side of the table was a caller's chair that faced the desk. West were street windows; south, the entrance door, and east, the office of a secretary.

Now voices sounded from behind the secretary's door. Matthis entered, his dark eyes pouncing on the lawyer. The black pompadour of the young man was oiled and long; the bilious skin, a lemon yellow; the cheeks above the undershot jaw, hollow. Between the satin stock and the lustrous broadcloth buttoned tight over his bulky frame, there was the V of a linen shirt, finely pleated.

"Hello, Jim." In spite of the pioneer greeting with the first name, there was no cordiality in the words; it was ground from the mouth by the iron in the man. With the wave of a wide hand that had a deep red intaglio ring on one of its stubby fingers, he invited the other to sit down at the table.

"Of course," he observed as he sat in the chair near the desk, "this is just a small case, but, if matters turn out to be satisfactory to us both, I'll retain you and Freeman permanently. I know young men's ambition. There is nothing a young man can't do.

"Now you see the case is this." Matthis spoke low and bent over the table. "About two years ago, one of our workmen made an invention that will probably revolutionize the car industry. He asked us for a certain sum for it, and this we were quite willing to pay. Then, after leaving our

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employ and listening to bad advice, he went up in his terms. These demands I will not pay.

"The trouble is here: Sometime ago, the man patented a small part of his invention. Now will his getting a patent for that part, interfere with our getting a patent for the whole invention?"

"But you said he refused to sell his whole invention."

The lips disclosed crooked yellow teeth. "We have details of a similar invention."

Just then, sounds of scuffling came from the room to the east, and a cry like that of shaken grief. The two men rose to their feet. The door burst open, and there, with his eyes on the lawyer, was Kearney, breathing hard.

"Look out, Jim! Here's where they stole it from me."

A pale trembling young man followed Kearney and apologized to Matthis: "He entered by the wharf door, sir."

Matthis fixed his eyes on the wreck and snarled: "Get out of here, Kearney!"

The ragged man shrank. Afraid and limp, he looked at Matthis. Then as he turned to the other, courage and bone came back to him. "Jim," he wavered as he pointed at the secretary, "he's the one stands back of the door and takes down what you say."

Again Matthis snarled: "Get out of here, Kearney!"

And as if he could no longer resist the strong will in the room, the big shapeless figure slumped, and stumbled out of the room.

LAKE FRONT

At once Matthis looked straight at the lawyer and sneered, "Do you want the case of that drunken sot or me?"

In a flash the young man thought of the Freemans eagerly waiting him, of Mrs. Fitzgerald demanding wealth, but then of Marie, and her wanting him to stand by principle. With exhilaration he answered: "Kearney's looks stronger, Bill."

The sun shone through the spring trees on the yellow stone of the big new courthouse. . . . Though the court was not in session yet, the people had commenced to gather for the last day of the Kearney case; some leaned against the picket fence, some lingered on the long entrance walk, some trod on the thin new grass to sit on the edge of the dry fountain, some waited on the high steps. There were ladies out for a day's shopping with their tiny parasols cocked against the sun; there were the Zouaves who, slim in their blue uniforms with the white belts, drilled at the corner. There were members of the athletic society who practised relays round the courthouse block, their loose shirts filled with wind. But most of the people near the courthouse waited for the case to begin. Men in these parts feared the railroads and loved the underdog. . . .

As the young man bounded up the stairs, people called good will to him. Case would be sure enough if it were in the hands of the whole city. . . . The courtroom was sunny and breezes fresh from the lake blew through it. The fine day made Matthis look grimmer and more powerful than

LAKE FRONT

ever. He vibrated with domination. Before it, the attorneys at his table almost salaamed, the judge deferred, the people at the rear of the room shrank. There was power in Matthis, like that in the lawyer's mother, but stronger, greedier. . . .

The Freemans were in chairs for visiting attorneys. If they wouldn't sit at his table, that was their concern. Of course the old man had said that Matthis' case should have been taken, adding, "The moral responsibility, if there is any, is with him, and guilty or innocent, he has a right to advice." As you would expect, Charley followed his father's lead. . . .

At the young man's table huddled his client, Kearney. Clean, shaved, but still tremulous, he kept his eyes averted from Matthis. . . . Now the court rose for the judge, the clerk called his "Oyez," and the jury filed in. . . .

". . . my poor client, gentlemen of the jury, then left the office of this president of two great businesses. He had to return home. He knew that his wife, lying ill there, was hoping, was praying for his success. He knew he would have to tell her that for this invention that would revolutionize railroads, he had been offered a pittance and the chance to keep his job. If he refused, he would get nothing and would lose his position.

"What, gentlemen of the jury, did this brave woman say? 'Fight for your right,' she told him; 'you'll get justice in the end.' But she grew worse from the bad news, from the lack of doctor and medicine—she refused to have what they could

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not pay for. Then she died, and from that time my client became, as Matthis here so justly described him, a drunken sot. . . .

"Now all I ask you, gentlemen of the jury, is this question: Shall that brave woman's words come true—shall Kearney get justice in the end?"

Tears ran down Kearney's cheeks, people cheered, the judge whacked for order. . . . Before the jury came back, the judge said sternly that any man who clapped or cheered the verdict, whatever it might be, would be thrown out by the bailiff. But when the foreman declared the case to be Kearney's, the little bailiff was no match for the shouting room that surged over the low fence to grasp the young lawyer's hand. . . . If Marie were only here. . . .

On the other side of the courtroom, the lawyers gathered up their papers. Freeman Senior bent over Matthis' chair. Why was that? . . . Now the crowd had thinned out, and he could see—of all people!—Mrs. Fitzgerald; she stood near the door and leaned on her parasol as if she waited for him. Had she seen and heard them and had she, too, been swayed? Wondering, he hurried to speak to her; as he drew near, he thought her face looked sunken, like that of one from whom all feeling has been drained.

They walked out into the cool dark foyer while she spoke with slow decisiveness. "If you think you won this case, Jim O'Mara, you're a fool before the world. Kearney has his judgment. The crowd had a good time. You got some

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kind words. But you can bet your bottom dollar, if you have one, that we're no nearer democracy nor justice to the poor than we were before. Power stays with the men you split with."

She snapped up her parasol and went down the steps. The blue light waved over her face. . . . At the bottom of the steps, she stood stock still. If her eyes were averted and her deep voice husky, her words were nevertheless firm as before: "Jim, I better say it now. I've told you before, but you don't seem to understand. Marie's just one who wants pretty things, and she's got to have some one who can give 'em to her. Can you? Why, just at present, Jim O'Mara, you're headed for the poorhouse and none of those you help will ever lift a hand to get you out. No, I like you Jim, but keep away from my girl, Marie."



*A fugitive slave,
his feet bound in rags*

CHAPTER SEVEN
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
FIFTY-SEVEN

HER words had shocked him for a time, but when the shock wore off, they had a strange effect. They made him determined to prove his ideal real; Marie herself would want him to do that, and tonight a chance would come. . . .

As for money, there would be enough of that later, and

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Mrs. Fitzgerald would grant permission for the marriage. He was sure of that even in these panic times. The office was cold and twilight now; coal and candles were at peak prices these days. However, there was light enough for him to scratch his daily entry in his journal, "Gas turned off. Tobacco out. Darky getting insolent. No clients; no appointments except with Mary Ellen's Tim who wants me to meet Martin of the Irish Republican Brotherhood tonight." . . .

Finishing, he pushed the ledger-like book back on the desk and went on thinking, feeling. . . . At dusk, especially, he longed for the fireside on Washington Street; some evenings, when desire was greatest, he strode by her house, but always passed without going in. Some men, he knew well enough, would disregard the mother; why shouldn't he? At times the question shook his body violently. Marie cared for him—she'd shown that the day he'd kissed her, the evening at the door when she had suddenly caught his hand in both of hers, her lips quivering, her eyes bright, her whole self startled at her own sudden action. . . . He could see the color of her hair with the hall light behind it, the purple depth of her eyes, the parting of her moist red lips, the bend of the slight body above her wide skirts, the tremulousness of her manner——

He jumped from his chair, strode to the stove. If he asked it, he knew that she would elope with him. But afterward—in times like these? No, he must not let her know extreme poverty; she was no powerful pioneer woman like Jane, but a

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frail school girl. No, not yet. The agony of denial shot through him; with his bare hands he gripped the top of the stove. The iron was only slightly warm; he shook the stove a little and a glare of red flashed behind the isinglass doors and died down again. Then he wheeled from the stove, marched to the windows, looked at the bank of clouds that slanted across the green horizon, glanced below at the passers-by. A procession of wretches shuffled past. . . .

All the feeling he suppressed seemed to go now to swell his distress at the sight. Democracy! Let the people rule! Who can rule when he has no food in him? Who can rule when he must sleep under wooden walks with the rats and roaches? There were plenty of his own among the twenty thousand out of work, desperate, drinking to forget.

What could he do here? What had he done? Why, he'd kept Kearney out of that crowd, that was all. Kearney had married a good plain woman who spent her time keeping her husband from grog-shops and from giving away all his new-found money to anyone who asked. Kearney, however, was gone—his inventive power at least; he would sit at his work-table for hours, frowning, not seeming to recall what his tools were for. In a sense all his struggle for Kearney had been useless, for Matthis had already killed the best in the man . . . and yet, though Matthis had done that murder, Charley, on his return from the grand tour of Europe with his father, would join the firm of lawyers retained by Matthis.

Yes, he'd kept Kearney out of the crowd, Kearney's shell.

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That was all. . . . But tonight his chance to do more would come. He must hurry to that appointment with Tim. . . . Out on the street the town-crier clanged his bell and droned out about a wandering child, "Lost! Lost! Lost!" A fugitive slave, his clothes jagged by brambles, his feet bound by rags, slunk along in the gutter. A covered wagon that headed east down a side street, lumbered over the frozen November ruts; letters were black on the wagon canvas, "Pike's Peak or Bust," and below, "Busted, by Gosh." . . . A drunkard lurched from a Clark Street groggery, and the light from the window showed his face marked by the erysipelas spread by the garbagey river among those already weakened by hunger. . . .

The sights seemed to rub his soul to soreness till he felt he must act. . . . Here was the hotel where he was to meet Tim and the Fenian. . . . He ran up the square, iron-railed porch of the hotel and entered the lobby. . . . In the jumpy light of gas affected by the first hard frost, this room had the air of appearing and disappearing; now the brass cuspidors, horse-hair chairs, stoves, marble floor, red-carpeted staircase leaped into existence and now there was blackness only. . . . As he waited, he picked up an advertisement from a near-by table; the dodger described the hotel: "A *bijou* of architecture and taste. . . . An exuberant larder. . . . Exquisite *cuisine*. . . . A great high school of refinement in which the most hopeless case of *mauvaise honte* gets his appetites rounded off. A man or

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woman will learn more of the *je ne sais quoi* which distinguishes the cosmopolite from the countryman by a brief residence at such an hotel than by making the grand tour of Europe.” . . . Chicago, he thought as he listened to the shambling of feet on the wooden walks outside, has forgotten democracy and is putting on airs. . . .

A blast of cold air made him look up. Tim had entered. He was just off a lake trip, and his cap and clothes were shapeless from wet lake air; his cheeks were unshaved, but his whole face glowed with the freshness of the night and the excitement of the evening. He was breathing fast, exhilarated by the prospect of spending an evening with the Fenian and his uncle, perhaps. . . . Coming close, the boy whispered:

“He’s here. Outside. Waiting.”

How real the boy’s enthusiasm was! It was something you could hold to; it would keep one from slipping into a nothingness where aims threatened to never be realized.

“He doesn’t want to come in—gotten the habit of keeping out of lit-up places—scared of spies, I guess.”

They left the hotel and found the Fenian as he stood on the edge of a circle of light cast by a street lamp. . . . In the flare-up of the street gas, he saw the eyes of the Fenian, shining eyes like Tim’s; the hollow cheeks; the strong chin that pushed out the top fold of a long knitted muffler wound round his throat. . . . The eyes shining like Tim’s. . . .

The Fenian took his hand; the other could feel an assured eagerness in the clasp, as if Fenian said, “I, who fought in

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the Irish rebellion of '48, who was sent in a convict ship to Van Dieman's Land, I have the right to ask help for this cause and expect to get it."

As the three walked west, on and on till they reached the open prairie, the high wind blew rifts in the black sky. If the cold cut through the tweed suit, the Fenian gave no sign; he was too much concerned with his work to know.

"Irishmen," the Fenian declared, "must no longer be subject but free, and they must have the chance to be free in their own republic."

The other breathed sharp and deep; the beat of his heart seemed timed to that of this man he had just met. . . . Continuing, the Fenian told of men all over the world who, roused by news of evictions in the old country, were ready to fight for Irish freedom, to strike at England, to get Canada; there were men who drilled on the slob land near Cork, men who plotted in the Roman-walled town of Chester, men who evaded the "Who goes there?" of the citizen police of Canada, men who plotted for the liberty of Ireland as they worked in the Australian bush. . . .

Standing on the dark curve of this prairie, you could feel the world turn, and, as it turned, you seemed to breathe the breath of those men sworn to the cause of freedom. . . .

"We want Americans," the Fenian's voice went on, "to drill men here, to be ready to come over when ordered."

"To come over"—to go to Ireland—to make Irishmen free. "When ordered"—if he swore the Fenian oath, he would have

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to go, even if by that time, he had married Maric. . . . Again, he thought of the purple blue eyes, and desire shook him, and desire, suppressed, seemed again to return to swell the great demand within him for action. He asked brief questions—recruiting—time of revolt. And all the while with a sort of abrasive pain below his exaltation he thought, “She would have me do what I started out to do.”



*Douglas sat
astride the
small chair*

CHAPTER EIGHT
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
FIFTY-SEVEN

DURING their talk, the men had turned citywards again. Chicago's light sputtered dimly against the dark eastern sky. . . . Now their footsteps echoed on the elevated wooden walks; now, on wooden steps going down to road level. . . . The streets were almost deserted. . . .

As they neared the hotel, a large figure jounced the steps. A red cigar lit up a shiny face whose small features were al-

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most lost in rolls of fat. Scottan. Douglas' aide. Was the Little Giant in town then? . . .

"O'Mara!" Scottan exclaimed; his cigar nearly fell from his mouth; he caught it, knocked at the end with a pudgy finger; and all the time kept approaching with his usual air of special confidence. "Why, I been looking for you all evening. Chief want to see you."

Douglas wanted to see him? Instinctively, he took a long step toward the hotel, but at once conscious of the questioning eyes of Tim and the Fenian, he stopped, then said, "I'll join you within the hour at Tim's."

Scottan whispered the Chief's room number, and waved his cigar spark in good night. . . . Within the hotel, gas had completely sputtered out; so a sleepy bell-boy took a lamp whose brown-orange chimney smoked greasily, and lit him upstairs to Douglas, room. From inside the room, came a penetrating voice: "Well, Stephen, I thought I was right when I violated that injunction but I was never sure till I heard your speech of defense." . . . On a sofa to one side the fire sat a former mayor, thin, tall, chiefly arms and legs. His gray hair shot up stiff from his forehead; his cheek lines were sunken arcs; his mouth was an inverted U. . . . Douglas sat astride a small chair and grasped the back as if it were the high pommel of a western saddle. His shapely head in air, his small solid figure upright, he might almost have been a model for some equestrian monument with the chair temporarily substituting for the horse. . . .

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The newcomer drew a tufted chair across a carpet of sprawly scrolls, sat himself in the semicircular glow of the fireplace, and waited expectantly. Why did his host want to see him? For nothing, except to chat? Douglas' words were about Kansas only, and Kansas was getting to be an old topic. But the Chief talked on:

"If President Buchanan, as a Southern Democrat, tries to make Kansas decide for a slave constitution, what's left for us Northern Democrats but to break with him?

"Like the President, the Republicans, too, are after the flesh-pots of Kansas, and they march down there with their Sharpe's rifles to make sure of getting what they want. It's not that way war can be avoided. Best way to silence 'em is to speak.

"Do you know Abraham Lincoln who does work for the Illinois Central? He says the Union can't go on being half slave and half free—it can't, of course, if Democrats like the President, and these new Republicans won't wait. Well, Lincoln and I are going to do a little debating; perhaps, then, these extremists may be quieted, and war may be prevented."

The lawyer jerked out an "Of course war will be prevented." Douglas, a statesman known to America and to all the courts of Europe, a man who had the Presidency within his grasp, would down Lincoln, a virtual nobody. Yet repeating "of course," his mind, in spite of the fact of the presence of Douglas, kept forgetting him and reverting to the Fenians . . . Australia . . . Canada . . . South America. . . . Silence for a moment; then Douglas asked suddenly:

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"If war broke out, what would the Irish do?"

The young man snapped to attention. "If war broke out——" Douglas, the great compromiser, spoke as if there were an actual possibility of war! The Little Giant leaned forward; he still looked as though he were mounted and had now assumed command.

"I warn you," he went on, "secession of the southern states will mean a country broken up, the experiment of democracy definitely ended. I do not know how you feel, but whatever happens to me, personally, I shall continue to believe in democracy and the Union."

Startled, the young man looked straight into Douglas' eyes. Yes. Douglas believed war possible . . . believed the Union must be saved if the experiment of democracy were to go on. . . . "What would the Irish do?" He thought of the Irish in all the parishes, north, west, southwest, along Archer Road; he thought of Martin and Tim. Ireland. But America, America had meant the only freedom the Irish had known for a thousand years. Almost without volition the words came, like an oath of support: "I, for one, would go, sir."

Then Douglas said slowly: "I—think—you may—have your chance. . . ."



"The papers don't sound pro-Douglas"

CHAPTER NINE

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED FIFTY-EIGHT

WHEN the debates between Douglas and Lincoln came, Tim, the Fenian, and Jim watched the papers closely. By that time the panic had subsided, and Chicago, less hit than other cities of the world, was returning quickly to normal conditions; such conditions had brought so many cases into his office that he had written to Mrs. Fitzgerald, telling her of his financial condition and asking permission to call again.

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Today, Tim and Martin faced him across a table littered with gray sleazy newspaper, and they, as usual, took the position that Douglas was winning, that there would be no war, for their hope blinded them. They wanted Douglas to win so that there would be no war for the Union and the Irish here would be free to go back to fight for Ireland. . . . But they would be free only after this war was over.

"But look at this," Tim protested, and pointed a large hard index finger at a paper—*The Times*, of course. *The Times* was the Democratic paper. The article told of the last debate in an Illinois town, of the cold September night, of the drizzling rain, of Douglas, victor over men and weather! Douglas met by crowds carrying a thousand torches!

In answer, Tim's uncle indicated another sheet; *The Tribune*, Republican, had counted only seventy-four torches at that same meeting.

"One hundred and fifty guns were fired in Douglas' honor!" went on Tim as he kept his eyes off the *Tribune* and read from some other Democratic paper.

In answer again, Tim's uncle read another item to show the difficulty Democrats had in getting up enough money for the salvo: "For the past month, Democrats have been scraping together all the spare dollars, shillings, dimes, and six-pences that could be obtained . . . bought enough gun powder for the Utah war and shot it off last night."

Tim was silent. Then the Fenian spoke. His eyes were hard, his chin protruded, his voice was cold. He would have

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to be convinced; he would not give up hope of immediate victory for the Fenians without fight; he had gone through too much to weaken now.

"Have you gone Republican perhaps?"

"No; I shall go Republican when Tim goes Know-Nothing."

"Your quotations from the papers don't sound pro-Douglas."

"They weren't. I'm trying to show Tim that Douglas may be losing."

"Why?"

"Because I think he is."

"You're not with him!"

The other, who'd proved his fidelity, tautened, and then relaxed. How could a stranger know? Besides, it was important that this man should understand. If he didn't, he might carry off many Irish when they were needed here.

"Yes, I am. I, too, say, 'Wait; don't go to war.'"

"Slavery——"

"Slavery's not the issue; the North had slaves till it found that the wage system was cheaper in the end; it knows the South will eventually find out the the same thing."

"Then what is——"

"Protective tariff; has been since '28."

"And given time, the South——"

"The South, too, will take to free labor, factories and protective tariff."

"Given time!" Tim burst in. "The South'll get time! The Democrats of the North and South together can beat any

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party going. Douglas 'll be the next President, and he'll give the South time."

His uncle looked at the boy patiently: "But Douglas as much as said just the other day that a territory can exclude slaves. The Southern Democrats won't choose him now; don't you see they won't?"

He watched realization spread over their faces: The Republicans would win because the Democrats would be split into two camps, Southern Democrats and Douglas Democrats.

But still the Fenian's eye was hard, and now his voice rasped with an insistence borne of years of devotion to one cause: "Whatever happens," he declared; "I will hold that every Irishman's first duty is to Ireland."

The air of the room was tense; the answer called for caution, if the Irish were not to be divided. . . . The uncle felt rather than saw that his nephew had leaned forward, troubled. Two allegiances. What was a man to do then? To the uncle, the boy seemed like all the Irish in Chicago, merged for a moment into one person. . . .

At last, the lawyer looked into the Fenian's eyes and asked: "What good are untrained Irishmen to Ireland?"

With cold eyes kindling, the Fenian studied him: "You mean the Irish should get their training in this war, and then come to fight for Ireland?"

The other nodded.

"Would you come?"

Again, the other nodded.

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And after a pause, the Fenian said slowly, "I'm likely, then, to offer no opposition."

Tim was breathing hard. Now, his voice shaky with emotion at having two desires reconciled, he put his big hard hand across the table to his uncle.

"I'll be with you both places, Jim."



The Wigwam, big and barn-like, with imitation turrets

CHAPTER TEN

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED SIXTY

AND on the day that he resolved to see Mrs. Fitzgerald and to repeat to her that he was doing well in business and meant to marry her daughter, he received a strange note from her. It read:

"Jim O'Mara, If I was the man Matthis is, I'd hold out. But you're doing better in business, and my girl likes you still. Call soon."

He went that evening. Through the thin June leaves of the branches of the trees on Washington Street, the moon fell white. Now at an open space you could see the stars;

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in the blue fabric of the sky, threads had snapped so that the light of heaven came through.

The Fitzgeralds must be having a party. Windows, and the space in front of the wide open door were yellow with gas light. Like clouds, the skirts of ladies drifted across the lawn; in a game of moonlight croquet, balls cracked together. From within came the tinkle of the megatherium in "Buffalo Gal," and the sound of voices and laughter.

There stood Marie, on the last doorstep, as if she were waiting. Her white tarlatan caught with rosebuds was airy in the door light. Her high-built hair was covered with fresh flowers. Her pink cheeks were touched by tendrils of curls. Her lips trembled, and her eyes said, "I love you best."

His hands caught hers, pressing them tight. He held his breath; then he said, "It's been so long, Marie. But now, you will come to me now? You will marry me?" She bent her head, but whether in consent or not, he did not know, only remembering then, that he must add, "I will go to war when it comes."

She looked up smiling. And he knew, as he felt he had always known, that she would have him hold to his purpose in life, that marriage to her was marriage with his ideal. . . .

Now out of the doorway sauntered guests, each his plate of slippery ice-cream dotted with red berries. . . . Couples nodded as they passed but kept on with their talking: "See the Madeira Pet? It's just in from Liverpool." . . . "He took all the prizes at the pigeon-shooting match." . . .

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"Oh, that night of the bobsled ride!" . . . "And how could I move with my hoop caught on the stair?"

While the couples went by, she stood so near he felt the tarlatan, harshly soft. All this life he loved because it surrounded her. . . . The couples with their lips apart in laughter, with their voices low or lilting. . . . How green came the smell of the fresh-cut flowers! . . . How bright swished the dresses, and how soft and still they became in the darkness! . . . All kept passing down the steps into the shadows of the lawn. . . . Yet she stayed by him, and that alone mattered. . . .

"Twenty-one!" she exclaimed. "Do you want to marry such an old lady?"

"Twenty-one" in her mouth had the sound of slapping carpet-slippers and clattering canes. . . .

Tonight they stood again on the porch steps, their engagement had been announced, and soon they'd have their wedding. Marriage to her was marriage to his ideal.

Then when the guests again came out, there was only one topic: "Shall you have people with you during the convention?" . . . "Railway rates are down; the place will be packed with hurrah-boys." . . . "There'll be forty thousand coming to this town."

"The vote's being taken!"

Human telegraph wired word round the city. Everyone who could leave his work went to the Wigwam. . . .

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Here was a cobbler with nails in his mouth. . . . Here was a waiter with a towel on his arm. . . . Here was a clerk with a pencil over his ear. . . . The new State Street horse-cars were jammed till the driver was squeezed to the dashboard; streaks of sweat blackened the brown hair of the horses. Omnibuses were so crowded you'd think the back doors would crash open and the passengers roll out. . . .

"Sidewalks up, and sidewalks down!" "Yes," one exclaimed to breathless visitors, "Chicago is raising the level some ten feet. She's getting out of the mud." This sidewalk was still down a level with the lake; the next was on piles. This street lay in mud, but the next one was graded. . . . Here was a big hotel that looked as though it had sunk and forced the ground up about it—all the places round were raised. . . .

The Wigwam! Big and barn-like, with slits of windows and imitation turrets, the frame convention hall threw back the glare of the morning sun of June. . . . Dapper easterners had stovepipe hats at angles to ward off the sun. Far westerners in furry chaps had five-gallon sombreros to shade their eyes. . . . Round the doors, people were wedged tight. The warmth of the day boiled all the odors. Musk on a dandy's handkerchief was an oily smudge on the air. Sweat on the body and gore on the boots of a stockyards sticker were salty strong. . . . How the scabbard of a trapper's knife dug in the lawyer's hip! The point of a solemn man's cane jabbed the toe of the lawyer's boot. . . . A red bandanna mopped the brow of the Hoosier trader in

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front of him. . . . Silence, till you could hear the click of the telegraph inside the hall. . . . Then the thunder of a voice followed by shrieks of, "Lincoln! Lincoln! Lincoln!"

Boom! Cannon at the courthouse, just a block away, let out a blast that reverberated through the plank walk up into their bodies. . . . Cane and red bandanna flew in the air. The dandy kissed the solemn man. The trapper hugged the stockyards killer. . . . Out surged the crowd, people with lifted heads, flushed faces, and eyes a-shine, shouted: "Lincoln! Lincoln! Lincoln!"

The wires were hot with the news, east and—south.



*Greatness
cost pain*

CHAPTER ELEVEN
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
SIXTY-ONE

PRISMS of glass, pendant from the chandelier, shone and twinkled in the breeze that blew through the open windows. The looped lace curtains billowed. And the warm spring air murmured with the voices of the mass of people in the street below.

But Douglas, in the parlor off the Tremont balcony, was

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not yet ready to speak to them. It was as though he wished to linger with the old friends. Holding to the marble mantel, he chuckled as he told a story to show how he'd swung his aid to the Union: "We came out for the Inauguration oath. I was near the President and saw he held his silk hat, not seeming to know what to do with it. So I took and held it for him."

Never in all his life had he seemed more of a giant than now when he'd given up all hope of fulfillment of the great ambition and granted full help to his rival. . . . Yet, in spite of all the chuckling, there was a peakedness in the swarthy face, a whiteness near the lips, a sinking-in near the temples, a stretching of skin over nose and cheekbones, a flabbiness of flesh about the collar. Greatness cost pain.

Slowly Douglas strode through the open doors out on the balcony. . . . Down below, the street was massed with faces, these within circles of light from street lamps, and those in squares of light from windows. These people who looked for guidance from this man again, were prayerfully quiet now. . . . The deep resounding voice: "If war must come, if the bayonet must be used to maintain the Constitution, I can say before God, my conscience is clear. I have struggled long for a peaceful solution of the difficulty. . . . But now, are we to allow our Union to be stricken down?" . . .

After the speech, Douglas sat at a marble-topped table and wrote a letter to Lincoln; he asked for leave for "James O'Mara to raise a brigade of Irish to fight for the Union." . . .

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And leave no sooner came than he commenced recruiting. He made a dodger that boys threw on every Irish doorstep: "Rally! All Irishmen in favor of forming a regiment of Irish volunteers to sustain the government of the United States in and through the present war, will rally at North Market Hall the evening of April 20. Come all. For the honor of the Old Land, Rally! Rally for the defense of the New!"

The regiment was filled that spring evening. . . .



*He fell near
Kernstown
in the Shenandoah*

CHAPTER TWELVE
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
SIXTY-ONE

IT WAS to say good-bye Jane had come to the city for, not to cry out, "Don't be going to your death, James. It wasn't for that I worked day and night in the lean-to." He was in the right of it, right being what a man decided between himself and God.

But as to believing with him that this was a war would keep democracy alive, she thought nothing of the sort. How could that happen, when those who believed in democracy went off to be killed, and those who had no use for democracy,

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people like Matthis and Freeman, stayed home to survive?

With all the work he had to do, clearing up his law cases and drilling his men, she couldn't be letting him take the long trip out in the country to see her. So small time he had, indeed, that Agnes said to her, "Let's be driving him to his home and we can talk to him then."

So Agnes and she rode to the barracks in their surrey. Barracks, was it? An old brewery only. A deserted German brewery on Polk Street, with the sun yellow on the red bricks and on the painted statue of a figure drinking out of a gold goblet, the statue above the doorway. . . . Dust and all, the big windows blazed with the light of the sun, and it going down. . . .

The surrey stopped in front of the open door, and she could see into a great bare room with strips of light through it. She could hear the scrape of boots gritty on the floor. . . . At last the sound of a loud command and of arms being stacked. . . . Then the men came out. Poor Irishmen in poor clothes. Not a bit of money nor uniforms had Washington sent; yet here they were leaving jobs and babies to go off with James. Oh, he must be sure, to take men off so. . . .

Was he never coming at all? It was hard to tell himself, her eyes not as good as they were. Her hand, grasping the black enamel support of the surrey-top, shook, and the fringe on the canopy swung, for there he was at last with the two hands of him stretched out to her. She wanted to leap out the rig and throw her arms around his neck and cry, "Oh,

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you'll not be going, James! Tell me you'll not be going!" But before she'd let her tongue say that she'd bite it through. No, she'd sit tight in the buggy, not seeming to care too much, though she couldn't help her lips twitching, nor her voice coming hard as if her throat had turned to metal; all she said was, "James, dear! It's good to see you." . . .

Back on the farm, night after night, she sat thinking. . . . Alone. . . . This was the day James and his regiment went off among the first, in box cars toward Missouri. . . . After that, all she knew of what happened was from the dispatches from Wilkie, daily, in the *Times*. . . . Now they were throwing up a breastworks near Coppertown, Missouri, and now the Confederates, three times their force, were closing in on them. . . . Today the Confederates cut them off from the river, and the next day under a hot sun, they stood siege, and the next and the next and the next till the hurt men tried to drink the water their wounds were washed in. . . . Today, no relief, nor the next nor the next, though a neighboring city swarmed with Union soldiers wanting action; at last, on the ninth day, surrender. . . . Then the exchange of prisoners, and James coming home, thank God!

The city itself went mad over the men; they being untrained soldiers who had resisted a long siege. That was the spirit of the Union, the city said—all but a few Know-Nothings who hated the honor James got, called him a foreigner, a damned Irish Catholic, demanded troops be officered by "white men," and said to Lincoln, it was rumored, "Don't let foreigners

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organize again. Military law says, a captured regiment can not be re-mustered."

Well, thank God for the Know-Nothings! was what she thought. . . . Why should James return? He'd done enough. All the beauty and fineness of him, and him to be killed only! If he went this time, he'd not be coming back again. . . . These thoughts were in her mind night after night on the farm, her being the last one up, her pulling the kitchen lamp down on its metal chains, blowing it out, and standing there with blackness rising round her.

But James, not to be put down, went straight to Lincoln and soon from Washington came a big letter addressed in James' black firm hand, and she was afraid to crack it open. When the foolscap was before her, all the words swam together, but she passed the back of her hand across her eyes. . . . What was it then? . . . He'd seen Lincoln. . . . "Lincoln said, 'Don't know where we're going to get the money to pay all the troops.' Then he walked down the room, and when he turned, he added gloomily, 'The bottom will fall out of this pot, by jingo!' Stopping before me, he went on, 'O'Mara, we have plenty of men; I'll make you a brigadier and let the regiment go.' I shook my head and answered, 'The regiment stayed with me when I had no money to pay it; now I'll stay with the regiment.' At last Lincoln said, 'Colonel, you're an Illinois lawyer and out in Illinois you know, they have mast-fed hogs and corn-fed hogs, and the corn-fed hogs are the best. Now I'm only a mast-fed lawyer in these military

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questions. See McClellan; he's a corn-fed lawyer, and whatever he does will be all right.'

"So I saw McClellan and he re-instated the regiment. . . ."

And then things happened as she knew they would. He fell near Kernstown in the Shenandoah. They brought him back. That was something. Wasn't Mary Ellen's Tim buried where he lay, in an unmarked grave? Him and hundreds more?

Aye, now the time was here, everything seemed as if it had all taken place before, so often she was dull from it. . . .

She rode in the steam cars to Chicago for the funeral, feeling as if she had never entered the place before, looking at it, listening to things said about it as if she was a stranger. . . . "Nine roads entering the city now." . . . Agnes drove her from her place on the north side to the house on Washington Street. . . .

A steamy hot July morning it was, the mist holding down the street and river smells and making her, fresh from the country, feel sick; as they crossed the pivot bridge at Clark, there was the sewer odor, and as they came on the south side, the stockyards. Many of the stockyards had come together now, putting down better roads and drawing up better water for cattle than the humans in the city had. . . .

Heavy dust from the unswept dirt and manure of the road rose in clouds and stuck to her hot face. . . . They passed Lake Street, the best business street, looked well with its four-story buildings. . . . Then the rig jerked over the horse-car

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tracks at Randolph Street, and after Randolph, Clark was paved with wooden blocks instead of cobblestones; the driving was quieter, but there were many lurching holes. . . .

To the right was the big stone courthouse with its basement and the three stories and high tower from which you could look out at all the city. . . . The fountain in the square was dry, and the grass and trees, seared-looking. . . . Not so long ago, she'd been to the top of the courthouse. She'd seen blocks and blocks of houses, square blocks as if they'd been laid out by the carpenter's rule; the streets were settled almost solid three miles from the center, and there were four or five roads like Clark that had houses much farther out. . . . Near at hand were the flat roofs of business buildings with high points like the Sherman House, and the grain elevators, and the shot tower over west; factories strung along the south branch. . . . Some of the new buildings looked fine enough with heavy cornices that seemed to be of carved stone, but sometimes heavy cornices rattled to the ground, come a high wind, and anybody could see they were of hollow tin only. . . . The square had changed little during the war. Here on Clark were business buildings; on Washington, original prairie a dozen feet below street level; on LaSalle, forsaken homes; on Randolph, between upstanding corner buildings, two-story tumble-down frames that had been there since the thirties; now they had the greasy windows of free-lunch resorts below, and above, the shingles of shyster lawyers. . . .

Now and again Agnes pointed out people on the street.

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There was a bounty broker who dealt in human flesh for the war. There were Canadians down for the big war-wages. . . . "See that man?" asked Agnes. "He's the biggest banker in town." And she whispered in an awed way as if he was God Almighty. . . . Then she threw her hand out southeast in the direction where the new marble terraces were; they were homes set in a row flush with the street, not like decent homes by themselves in big yards with trees around them, but glittering palaces that flaunted their riches on the curbstone. "The Freemans and Matthis live over there."

And James? James was gone. He was dead in this house they'd just stopped at. . . . Rigs and people were thick about the place. The grass in front was matted from people standing on it. She got out, with them all stiff and silent—They'd know better what to do if she cried or fainted. . . .

From an open window came the cry of James' baby, a boy. . . .

The whimper rose to a whine till you'd say the child was a weakling only, and none of James in him.

PART THREE



*The fountain
Cupid had a
white cap and
epaulets*

CHAPTER ONE
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-SEVEN

A SOLDIER'S son shouldn't mind about being poor," thought the seventeen-year-old boy as he sat on the hard carpet seat of the street car, beside him the box of New Year's cards his mother wanted him to deliver, "and saints don't. And I'm going to be a saint."

The starched ends of his frayed collar prickled his neck.

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The icy air from the window crack behind him got under his thin suit and settled like damp cold underwear next his skin. He kicked his numb feet in the musty straw of the street car floor; then he twisted sidewise so that his back would be against the stove.

This was the street! He jumped up. The driver shouted, "Whoa!" The car jerked to a stop, and the tinkle on the horse's collar stopped. He plunged off. Just like a Sunday morning. Quiet. All the way from State Street to the Avenue, his feet were the first to make holes in the dry sugar-dusty snow.

The Avenue, too, was still. On the east, piles of snow that the railway trains had plowed clear, and a lake that seethed under ice cakes. On the west side was this flat-faced stone row of houses. He had to leave a card here. As he dropped the greeting into the basket of gilded grass that hung on the door, he thought, "Not everyone who lives here is rich." This family, having lost much money in the panics of the seventies, kept boarders, or companions as they were called on the Avenue, and tried to keep up appearances. But next door lived the wealthy Mrs. Byers, guardian of Elizabeth, the little orphan girl his mother said she hoped he'd marry some day. Elizabeth was rich. That was why.

Kicking the snow, he came to a large house with a mansard roof, entered the south gate and went up the drive. What a big place! There were mounds of snow; the fountain Cupid had a white cap and epaulets, and a conch shell filled with drift. Behind a barred basement window beneath a high

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verandah, a hired girl ironed at a padded table; she never had to answer the doorbell for there was a butler there, Chicago's first butler. . . . What if the owner, Mr. Matthis, were you, and you had all those servants to do your bidding. Your chest swelled at the thought. People said that Mr. Matthis wanted to marry your mother. That wouldn't be right; a long time ago, your father had fought Matthis in the courts. However, your mother urged, "Let bygones be bygones. I'm sure Mr. Matthis will be very glad to give you a start when the time comes." . . . Somehow the place took the boy's mind off wanting to be a saint; it thrilled him, down to his very hands so that his fingers stretched out as if they wanted to grasp things. When he left the gate, he shuddered a little, feeling as if he had been on a high mountain with the devil showing him the kingdoms of the earth. . . .

Across the street, the glass domes of the Exposition building were bright in the sun. He recalled all the machinery and pictures he had seen exhibited inside and remembered the big sign hung with red bunting; it ran: "Chicago Smelts for Colorado and Four Iron Regions, Tans for Texas and the Northwest, and Packs for All Christendom." . . . After boarding a car at Washington Street, he went through the tunnel under the river and came out at a place on the West Side where factories were mixed up with shops and shacks. He looked at the skinned carcasses hanging before meat shops, heard noon church bells ring, and began to say the Angelus, "The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary. . . ." Here

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was a tar-paper shanty black against the snow; thin smoke spread out from a tin-capped chimney; a goat huddled near the door. The Kearneys lived here. Old man Kearney had gone through his little money and died; the son followed you about at school. Leave a card? They'd like it, and why not the poor as well as the rich?

Then over to Ashland Boulevard where the Kentuckians lived. . . . And home. . . . The story-and-a-half house was way out on Wabash Avenue; beyond were bigger residences, shadows in oak groves. . . . Within his home, he found everything in readiness for the afternoon callers, even to the fine fire blazing on the hearth. He looked about: The Nile green carpet, the William Morris brown paper, the cheesecloth curtains that draped the long front windows. The second-hand spinning wheel to one side the iron mantel, and the pink bow that tied up the fuzzy gray spindle. The brown sewer-tiling filled with cat-tails and the gilded chopping bowl on the mantel with the plaque of purple pansies hanging just above. The armless ebonized chairs with backs that slanted till they made you feel as if you were at the dentist's. The gilded milking stool gartered with pink ribbon. . . . He did not like this room.

As he spread out his red tendony fingers over the fire, he heard his grandmother and mother move about upstairs; they were putting on their best dresses. . . . Slow drag of a velvet train on the stairs, then his mother appeared at the brown chenille portieres with the air of one who waits to be

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admired; the chestnut curls in the waterfall coiffure still bobbed a little. How white her bosom was against that square-cut black gown! As she swept into the room, he could see by the harsh early afternoon light that the dress was old, that the pile was worn off at the elbows and at the folds of the big bustle. . . . She exclaimed "James dear, just in time! Get the ink. My right elbow is showing through. See where the white speck is." How he hated the feel of velvet against his finger-nails! And how he liked her gallantry!

After he had inked the spot, she asked him to shutter the windows and light the gas for the party. And then he had to dress. The scorch he'd made when he pressed that suit last was very noticeable. Even in the gas light you could see the pointed brown mark on the wiry gray and black mixture. However, he'd have to wear it. He must be above poverty. Like great men. Like saints. When he opened the door, let all guests look! Why should he care?

Jingle of sleigh-bells stopped before the house. Now the shadow of a man zig-zagged across the glass—someone who'd taken too many egg-nogs with the Kentuckians on Ashland Boulevard. Now ladies in tilted plumed hats, in fur coats frou-froued up the stairs. Often the door-opening flashed white and cold; often the hallway seemed darker than before, with starey white lumps of snow melting on the carpet.

This marble seat of the hat-stand was cold. And these hillsides of coats smelled damp. Surely no more guests would come now. He would go in. To the right of the door, Mrs.

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Byers stood near her brother, Mr. Gregor—Matthis' rival in the car-parts business. He was a stocky red-faced man with a loud voice and sharp eyes. Now he stared at a florid woman with jewels on her bare neck and snorted, as Mrs. Byers tried to hush him, "Diamonds on raw beef!"

To the left of the door, an Indian fighter, stiff from old wounds, jerked himself into the circle about the boy's mother, bowed till his brown beak and white goatee were close above her hand, and tremuloed, "Sheba's queen had not a tithe your charm."

Then he passed two men, one of whom said, "John, the banker, is a good man and keeps the Sabbath." And the other returned, "Aye, and every other dom thing he can lay his hands on."

A large woman, with a Get-thee-behind-me-Satan manner, decreed, "No one who goes to see Sarah Bernhardt is a fit guest for my dinner table."

When he had nearly reached the fireplace, a sudden movement in the room caused him to turn. He saw the portiere whip back as though someone had left in a rush. A girl's voice rose high from the hallway, "Don't! Don't! My mamma won't like it!" Then some big bass boomed, "O, to hell with your mama!"

Sounded like the packer. Of course, no one would say anything to him because he was rich and important. . . . It must be fun to keep people cowed by your power. Why was it that whenever he was with people like these, the desire

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to become very rich almost overwhelmed him? The thought was a temptation, and saints fled from temptation. . . . Turning from the fireplace, he hurried to his room, the center of the three under the roof. The place was dark, and, as usual on a party day, his mother had filled his room with all the unpresentable furniture of the house. After he lit the gas, he sank into one of the old chairs, plucked at the shreds of fabric on the arms. He watched the saw-tooth of yellow flame and the shine it made on the green-painted slope of the wall, on the snow-laden glass of the sky-light. . . .

Up here he could think of the world he would help make, where there would be no poverty, but well-being only, no hate but love instead. Impossible? Why nothing was impossible with God!



*The high chimneys
of the great Reaper
plant*

CHAPTER TWO
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
EIGHTY-SIX

NINE years passed. . . .
Some of his hours he spent at the Chicago University, near
the blue lake, under the scrub oak trees; the rest of the day,
he gave to newspaper assignments. In these slack times, he
would not have had even this reporting job if it hadn't been
for Michael, Aunt Jane's son. And of course, he must work

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his way, but strikes, strikes, strikes—Was there no other news in town?

Now, out on the prairie, somewhere along Blue Island Avenue, perhaps near the Black Road, he must find a mob of men and their anarchist leaders. . . . Day after day, he was in the thick of the fighting; he heard the strikers call for dynamite to throw at the rich, he saw the police club and shoot the strikers, he watched the men on the paper write such things as "Feed these men out of work—feed 'em strychnine—feed 'em lead." . . . Nowadays some people were turning atheist because of Bob Ingersoll's lectures at the Haverly Opera House. But it was clash like this fighting for food in a land of plenty that made you doubt.

This avenue diagonaled from the city away out across the countryside. It was a rutty road, with puddles whipped to silver cord, or gray-white with scudding clouds. Occasional stores pressed close to the wooden walk, and you got the dry smell of hay-and-feed shops or leathery whiffs from saddleries; next these, were vacant lots that lay lower than the walk, vacant lots where grass was green beneath the brown criss-crossed stems of last year's weeds. Far down the road against a white horizon jutted a bridge over the southwest river branch, and to the right of the bridge smoked the high chimneys of the great Reaper plant. Since the Civil War, factories had risen here in no time, as if soot specks from the city were so many fertile spores that sank to the ground and grew to be smoke stacks. . . . It was smoke from these river chimneys that

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smarted the eyes of the strikers. Scabs ran the place full blast. Union men had been out since February, striking for shorter hours. And now May was at hand. . . .

Who was that man ahead? The gray-streaked beard that blew back over the bent shoulders had a familiar look; to whom did it belong? To Harris? Once Harris had been a weaver in Lancashire and now he was an anarchist-saint in Chicago. This venerable an anarchist? It was as hard to give him the name as it was easy to grant it to leaders like Glomski, the iron-forged from Poland, or to Frederic, the illegitimate son of a German noble. . . . He caught up to the weaver. "Hello."

"Why are you here?" The patriarch gimleted the reporter with his eyes, but everyone knew this man's fierceness never lasted; sight of his opponent always changed his mind; he seemed to think, "Another mortal is nothing to fight with. . . ." He liked to be with this old man who, though he was no believer in God, wanted the Brotherhood of Man right enough.

"I'm here to earn my pay-check," answered the young man. That was the truth. So much did he hate these clashes that he wished at times to shrink in size and hide away in some dark spot forever. This thought recurred lately as if he once had been happy in such hiding and longed to be again—a dark place that fitted closely round him. . . . Saints wouldn't hide away. But saints were sure of God and lately he—he was sure of nothing, feared everything.

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"There'll be no trouble today," said Harris pulling his flying coat about him, "unless your police start it."

His police? Even as a child, he'd shrunk from them as he had from teachers—people who could make you do what you didn't want. Now, overwrought from his double work on the paper and at the university, he felt terror at bluecoats and strikers till the whole city seemed a huge kennel where dogs snarled, sprang at one another's throats, chewed bloody flesh down to the bone. Dog eat dog. Sometimes he found himself suddenly awake in the night time, thinking of jaws that dripped, of a world that smelled of blood and death.

"If you want a real strike story," Harris went on, "get away from the noise; get into the homes around. Think of Glomski's wife, sick, hungry, but telling him to go fighting——"

Fah! Even if the Pole hadn't struck, the chances were he'd be without work. What with panics, with new machinery, there were few jobs left. And small hope of betterment now in the West. The frontier was gone for good; men had to stay home and grab from one another. . . . Yet it was nice of the old man to feel that people mattered; if they did, perhaps a God made 'em.

He must remember this drug store with its mortar and pestle that swung dirty gold against the gray slab-front, with its glass globes red and blue in the window; he could telephone his story in from there. . . . How bright green the branches of that stunted prairie tree! . . . Here were strikers' homes, a row of cottages with gray paint washed thin by rains and

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blistered to bare spots by summer suns; from the sidewalk, gangways led across yards to front doors; next the gangways were steps that went down to the yards. On one of these stairways stood a woman whose loose gray wrapper was pulled close by the wind; she was a pregnant woman, ugly molder of the striking breed, and one with the prairie, one with the wind. . . .

Why did she gnaw the knuckles of her red hand and stare this way and that through her blowing wisps of hair? Now she extended her foot on the wood, threw her whole weight on it till the gray felt slipper spread as far as it would go; yet she held back as if she were chained.

As the woman recognized the old man, she tossed up big arms bare to the elbows, clasped her hands, and whimpered with relief. Padding forward, she jerked her head toward the house and cried, "Glomski, his wife, she dying. I'm afraid. Come in to her."

On his run to the steps, Harris stopped short and said to the young man—was it with a sneer or with a hope that sight of these homes might make reporters different? "Here is a story for you, 'Wife of Strike Leader Dies as He Harangues Mob.'"

Mud bubbled round the plank that led to the gangway to the basement door, in the narrow hallway you could discern the smudge that ran hand-high along the white-washed wall. Now the fresh wind eddied through the place, and now the stale sweetish smell of poverty filled your nostrils. . . .

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How dark and still the back room was! When a person was dying, didn't breath come hard? But as they paused in the darkness, he could hear no sound. . . . Pin pricks of light showed through the window shade; the old man shuffled across the bare floor and jerked at the blind. How heavy-handed he was. With loud clicks, the thing snapped up and spun round and round and round. But he couldn't stare forever at the shade. . . .

On a mattress in the corner, a woman lay with her light hair spread about the pillow ticking. . . . His nails jabbed into his palms as if to hold a scream there. . . . A brown blanket was drawn over her; a clay-colored wrapper was about her shoulders, but it was undone, and at her breast a baby sucked; you could see the soft roundness move with the infant's lips, but of itself the white curve did not move. . . .



A mass of upraised fists, then Frederic rose above them

CHAPTER THREE

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED EIGHTY-SIX

HALF-SOBBING, James ran toward the strikers' mob. The woman back there lay dead. He must find the Pole and tell him to go home to her.

Rumble of thunder or men sounded close at hand, and at the next side road he turned right. . . . A great lager beer goblet sign hung out over the porch of the corner roadhouse and creaked in the wind. How littered the backyard was with tin cans and papers! But who minded anything that happened away out here? . . .

After that back room, he thought he'd be glad to be with

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the mob again, with people who lived and breathed, but now that he saw it as it swayed there on the prairie, he feared it, wanted to flee from it. It was a monster made of men. . . . Jumping the road ditch, he sank into the spongy green and then sped around the edge of the thousands gathered there. . . . He searched the crowd with his eyes, for the Pole might be among these men here. No? Perhaps, then, he was with the speakers. . . . Behind the ladder used as a rostrum, there was a place he could get through. Fah! The smell of these strikers was the smell of a herd. With their shaggy beards and nodding heads, these men were buffalo who stamped and bellowed, ready to charge. Nothing but clash here, nothing but hate. Would life ever be anything else but this? . . .

Caught midway in the crowd, he heard the thick voice of the speaker as he ended his harangue, "No more words! Let us henceforth speak with guns!" Then the agitator turned to jump from the ladder. Glomski! You could tell by the yellow stubble on the bullet head, by the red scar on the pallid cheek-hide. "Glomski!" But the wind carried the sound away. Then the mob surged forward to hear the new man, and swallowed up the other. . . . Even when he'd fought through to the front, he could not find the one he must speak to. . . .

He mustn't look any more, for he had his job, and this anarchist now on the ladder always made copy; he was a man who did more than talk bombs, he made them, fashioned them with those tapered fingers that rested white on the ladder

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top. Did they touch lightly on wood only? They'd seem in their right place if they clutched at throat flesh. . . . Tawny, Frederic's hair and beard waved in the wind there; eyes a-slant in his pointed face, glared blue and malignant; curve of the body made you think of steel springs. . . . Now the crowd was quiet, he molded words and flung them out as far as they would go; he said: "Dynamite in a lead bomb is more powerful than guns. Don't forget it." That was all. He leaped to earth. But with one sharp thrust, he'd forked the cattle hide.

Now, O God, the herd stampeded with the cry: "On to the factory! Get the damned scabs!" The mob struck the ladder, which toppled but couldn't fall because of the men beneath.

Hurled across the prairie against a wooden walk, he kneed his way up and stood to search the crowd below. . . . There was someone he must find; it was important. . . . Now he was flung into the watery road ditch, but he clutched the street stones and got to his feet. Why did his hands hurt? All skinned and bloody. His body shivered as the wind struck his wet clothes. "Where's Glomski?" No man answered, but the monster mob roared out, "Scabs! Scabs! Get the damned scabs!" And all the while, the woman lay dead on the mattress. "*Where is Glomski?*"

Smoke from the factory chimneys ahead was black as anarchists' flags. . . . Clashes were his job. Not caring. What did the dead wife of a Polak matter? Wasn't the rule of life, "Kill, or be killed?" His work was to get the

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setting for the slaughter. . . . Up on the turret of the main plant, a man bent to shout below. This side the iron bridge—you could see the masts of a river boat—the mob swept toward the factory at the right. Horses being driven from the stable-office building near the street, reared in the air. Freight-handlers on the platform of the receiving-house ahead jumped within doors and crashed them shut. The engineer of a train that puffed out between receiving-shed and main plant, jammed on the brakes; you could hear clash after clash of the couplings of the cars behind; you could see the engineer leap and run from the cab. Men, Pinkertons, maybe, watched from the covered bridges flung from shed to factory.

Now the scene was set, the act would commence. “Feel like an old reporter, scornful and apart, and your job won’t hurt you so.” . . . A mass of upraised fists, then Frederic rose above them, must be up on the receiving platform. . . . Some men, crowding forward, tripped and fell on the steel tracks of the yards. Now Frederic shot up a hand, and the yelp of “Scab!” was cut off as with a valve. Silence obtained—Silence? Whistles of the factory were opened, fog-horn on the river was let loose. . . . The man on the platform did not wait long for the sound to cease but jumped down into the mob and rose with a jagged rock held high in his hand. Sign enough for the strikers; they squatted along the railway ties and clawed for stones. . . . The fight was on. . . .

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He ran to the office building, opened a door, slammed it, tried the next, and found it locked. Trapped like a rat in the vestibule, he crouched, watched a panel of the outer door crack as a stone was heaved against it, saw splinters of wood needle into the dark. He listened to sounds as they fought one another. Shriek of whistle, moan of foghorn against clang and batter and crash of rocks, then there was a sudden let-up in the roar, and sharp scattered shouts of warning. . . . Opening the door a slit, he saw workers drop their stones, bend, and run toward the bridge, or back away with their hands in the air. . . . Like a man possessed, a yellow-haired worker shook his fist toward the north. . . . Bluecoats! By the hundreds, afoot, and in open patrols. Police in a wagon raised their guns, and before he'd banged the door shut, he'd seen a body curl and drop. . . . Now the reporter pressed back against the cold plaster wall of the vestibule and retreated at the crack of guns. . . . Should he be out there? He had something to tell someone. Quite important. . . . When quiet came too soon, he leaned heavily on the doorknob. "Turn it now; will you never get out?" . . . How clear a cloudy day could be! Though the light was gray, it defined the bodies with great distinctness. . . . God! He'd nearly tripped on a dead man whose coat had flopped up till you could see the suspenders brown against his blue shirt. . . . Here and there, men who were only wounded, tried to stomach themselves away unseen; you could see the flash of an eye near the ground and the inching

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along of the body. . . . To the right, before the stable door, police stood over a dark heap, and a voice triumphed on the wind: "It was me who got him." . . . As the reporter joined the group, a policeman turned the body over with his foot; and in the turning, cinders squeaked and the man's trousers, stiff and rusted, with holes burnt in them, stuck up oddly; the yellow head plopped back on a heap of flattened horse manure; you could see the pale cheek had a deep scar. . . . The man was the iron-forged. . . . The man was Glomski! . . .

"Hurry up if you want to make the next edition. Who are the rest of the dead?" . . . Names in his pocket, he ran down the street to telephone. . . . News banged in his head, trying to get out—yet there had been something he'd meant to do, important, too. What was it? . . . See the lone stunted prairie tree that lies in the wind there. It was near the cottage where he'd been this afternoon. A woman had died. Then her husband had been shot. Someone in that house would want to know and get his body from the morgue. . . .

He jumped down the steps, and knocked. The basement door opened to a yellow crack only, but the scared eye of the neighbor woman recognized him. No sooner had he said, "Glomski," however, than she burst into foreign jabber and prevented his news. Perhaps there would be some one in the back room——

From behind the closed door of the front half of the base-

LAKE FRONT

ment sounded the sawing of boards. . . . Did very poor people make coffins for their dead? . . . Across the threshold of the back room a soft light trembled, and when he entered there, he saw that candles had been placed at each side the mattress; a clean sheet had been drawn over the dead woman and on the smudged whitewashed wall above her head, a crucifix had been nailed—the white china Christ almost breathed in the candle light. . . . Against the glow, knelt broad peasant women who mumbled the rosary and counted Aves on big black beads—one woman without beads used her blunt fingers.

To their prayers, the wind outside wailed an antiphon. As he listened, he grew rigid. Other sounds came from without, and he distinguished them; he knew why the neighbor woman had refused to heed the name of Glomski, why there was quick sawing of the coffin boards. The law might come and accuse her of scheming with agitators. So she would remove all trace of them. From the yard, the plunge of a spade in the earth, the grate of dirt against iron, the thud of spadefuls on the ground.



*"Metal stars!
Police! Here
they come!"*

CHAPTER FOUR
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
EIGHTY-SIX

THE dodger in the reporter's pocket read, "Revenge." Haymarket Square swam in the wet dusk, the windows of the buildings like eyes of dead fish. All kinds of buildings were there—rough gray stone places like the big meat market, a few red brick piles like the soap store, and little frame shops. . . .

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A horse clunked down the wooden ramp of a livery stable, then clanged its hoofs on the stone cobbles. A farmer led the beast to one of the produce wagons in the Square, backed it between the shafts, snapped the harness buckles, and stepped from the axle to the high seat. Before he rattled away, he stuck out his hand as though he was sure the rain must fall at last. . . .

Cobbles were littered with hay that speared from little light-colored drifts. Egg-shells were in sharp white bits. Papers stuck like skin to the street. . . . Overhead, the telegraph wires on the stark poles buzzed, and at hand the water in the iron fountain gurgled. . . .

After watching the water swill over the brim of the horses' trough, the reporter idly squeezed the brass ears of the faucet on the sidewalk half of the fountain. He listened to liquid hit tin, and when the cup was filled, he suddenly let it clatter the length of its brass chain.

Then, at once, as if he must go back to what was there, his freed right hand plunged into his pocket. Feeling the limp sheet there, he saw it again in fancy, its big black word, "Revenge!" It sentences read, "Your masters sent out their bloodhounds, the police . . . they killed six of your brothers at the Reaper factory. . . . To arms!"

"They'll meet tonight. Here!" he agonized, "Why do you stand doing nothing!" To the south of him on Desplaines Street, was the police station. He'd just been there, found it crammed with five companies held in reserve; police on

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edge with long strike hours, police craving the word go. One man had said, "Gatlings do good jobs on streets full of strikers." Another, his voice frayed like the end of a new-cut picture wire, had jabbed your ear with, "Wish we'd get a thousand of 'em without their women or damned brats about. We'd make short work."

To the north on Desplaines, a little beyond the Square was the place the meeting would be held. To the north—why, there was Frederic! Like a Lincoln Park lion, he curved about the warehouse on the northeast corner and went up Desplaines Street. . . . "You're following, you fool. You want to talk to him, this anarchist never known to open his mouth to reporters; you think that even if he won't listen to words, he must heed the horror in you——"

Why shouldn't he listen to you? You understood how things were with him. A copper had told you about that packet of letters that showed how the anarchist had begged his mother to get his birth legalized, how the woman, after long delay, had made her working-man husband swear that her child by the nobleman had been his. But that paper-certificate—that had been no shield against the knife-word, bastard. That slit through his sullen strength, made him scream out cries, never about the thing that hurt, always of wrongs done to mobs. . . .

You followed him into the dark street. . . . Deserted factories entombed the road, and street lamps were like candles set apart in a crypt. . . . This man ahead walked to

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the rhythm of his creed, "Masters own our tools, can give us bread or keep it; gunpowder granted the middle class freedom; dynamite will free us." . . .

But—What?—Between you and the man you trailed ran a third form, came at you, collided, cursed. Dim gold laurel wreath and shiny stiff visor of a cap, breath from hot nostrils. Desplaines officer. Had he darted from some alleyway? He panted, "O'Mara! This meeting's a blind. Their real plan's to attack the yards tonight." And then he rushed on south toward the station. Hadn't he seen the man ahead?

Now the anarchist's figure was clear in the green-yellow light from the window of the saloon at the corner. . . . What a sick odor of old garbage here! Alley, back of warehouse. . . . Then someone else—companion of the officer, perhaps?—emerged from the muddy alleyway, pulled his foot to the walk as though he drew it from black dough. Man from the *Times*. "Bunk to watch this place. They'll be out near the Reaper factory, out near the Black Road tonight." Then he swerved toward the Square and disappeared. . . . And Frederic, too, was gone. . . .

Had he turned the corner or entered the saloon? . . . Rail yards. Black Road? Where the story would be the man you followed knew. What the story would be—he knew that, too. . . . Beyond the corner was no sign of him. The saloon then? For an instant you stopped at the window to get your procedure straight. . . . Beyond the glass, you noticed a paper bill poster of Forepaugh's circus slung

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over the brown-draped pole; it was a picture of a woman balanced tip-toe on a galloping white horse. . . . Once inside the saloon, you would phone the office the tips about the railyards and the Black Road. . . . "But you know that's not why you turn the knob of this frosted glass door."

A long narrow room spotted with gas flares smearing reflections in dusty mirrors—yes, though you could not find him yet, he was here and marked your coming with hate and suspicion. Where could he be? . . . Here to the left was the bartender. Ha! Ha! You were glad to see how comical he looked—that chestnut hair parted in the middle, smoothed, then twisted back in a semi-curl. Over the bar, he pushed a free-lunch sandwich with fat white ham flopping beyond the edge of rye bread. No one was there to take the thing. . . . To the right at a table near you was a man who stopped blowing beer-froth to glare. Beyond, at the other tables were men who set their glass mugs down, held their pretzels unbitten. Could Frederic be in one of the three-sided compartments over there near the wall. . . . "The phone's on the panel beyond the bar."

While you wound the signal bell and stared at the mermaid painted on the panel, you felt the hate in that room like a hot fire at your back. His hate, their hate; workers thought reporters used phones to call police. . . . Newspaper men had phoned at Meyer's drug store, and Meyer's had been smashed to bits. . . . In the course of life here, men were slugged for a ten-spot; in a cause, for nothing. . . .

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A man's steps across the floor—you could hear his heels thud sawdust, click on bare wood, then stop. . . . Receiver to ear, you turned about slowly, saw the sloppy drain board back of the bar, the laces of bartender's shoes, the brown splashes on his apron. Then swift, your eyes slanted up across the bar. On the other side crouched—"Hello! Hello!" . . .

You banged the receiver on the hook. Breathing deep and fast, prickling with sweat, you walked in the silence of that room down toward him. Tawny beard. Evil eyes. Horror met hate now. Though he never spoke, though you had no words, horror and hate talked in their own tongues:

"Anarchist!"

"Dirty spy!"

"You think a lead bomb will change a city."

"Fear makes concessions."

"You have only a mob behind you—unarmed."

"But mighty in numbers."

"And in the end, they'll hang you by the neck till you're dead."

"Never that, spy, never that."

His eyes spluttered like a red fuse that sparks down close to the dynamite. . . .

Hot with knowledge that was not knowledge, you went out of doors again and sweat dried on you. . . . People—Who are marked for death tonight?—gathered in the street, dark figures except now and then, a woman in a light dress,

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a man in his shirtsleeves. Down the street, this side the alley, a staked truck had been dragged. Old Harris was on top. You wanted to throw your head back and laugh. That ancient lamb yoked in people's minds to the young lion back there! Oh, very funny! . . .

Bumping through the crowd—There must be two thousand here now—you crossed the road, nearly tripped in a deep gouge in the stone street, and took a stand on the low step of a fire-escape on a building nearly opposite the wagon. You felt the iron banister cold and wet beneath your hot hands. "Sh!" people hissed, and then old Harris began to speak. . . . He mentioned the name of the magnate Matthis, and people near the wagon yelled out, "Hang him!"

A plain clothes man—there must be many in the crowd—was near the fire escape, noted the cry, moved south toward the police station. . . . Couldn't God stand in the Square tonight between the station and this mob? . . . But many people here—did the plain clothes men see?—were unmoved by the speech. For instance the boy who laughed and shrilled "Hang him!" as periods to all the old man's sentences? The girl who pleated a Revenge circular into a fan? The German who muttered, "Ach! Why did I come!" The prosperous man who puffed the word "Tame!" out with his cigar smoke? . . . Tame—as yet. You took out your watch, opened the lid, let the light shine on the crystal. The long thin hands pointed to ten o'clock—

A sudden wind blew cold down the street. People pulled

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at their coat collars and drifted north and south, going home. "Thanks for coming, cold wind." Pointing up to the storm sky, one man called, "Let's adjourn to Zepf's hall." But someone else behind bellowed, "Can't. Furniture workers got a meeting there." So a few hundred stayed and listened longer to the old man. . . . Ten after ten now. Would they never go? You looked about the street. This way. That way. . . .

As you turned south, your eye was caught by a row of tiny gleams, tiny gleams away across the Square, "Metal stars! Police! Here they come. . . . And here, somewhere in the darkness, Frederic! . . . Oh, keep them apart now, God, and . . ."

Stretching across the street, a whole rank of police emerged into the light of the Square. Another rank followed that, and another, and another. The whole five companies, of police! People craned their necks, some shrieked and scattered, some stood their ground.

Clubs at their sides, guns on their hips, the helmeted police marched past you, on to the wagon where the old man stood. Club upraised, the Captain commanded, ". . . Disperse." And the old man protested, ". . . Peaceable." Nearly two hundred coppers here, Anarchist. Two hundred clubs. Two hundred guns. "Where are you now, Anarchist?"

Out from an alley, it raced through the air. Cigar butt. Baseball. Rocket. Then with a burst and bang of yellow light, it smashed between two companies of police. Lead bits,

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and blackness. Now the air was cut with gun flash. People fell to the street. . . . "They'll get you now, Anarchist. They'll make you talk at last. Police have their ways. . . . They beat you till you bleed and say what they want you to. . . . Blood like dark red pancake batter on the dirty floor. I saw a man they did that to. I saw his blood there."

Blind with horror, you ran by the building wall, on toward the Square. A man with his legs shot, pulled himself moaning along with his hands. . . . As you fled, your foot crushed his fingers against a basement grating. . . .



*"I said they would
not hang me, Spyl"*

CHAPTER FIVE
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
EIGHTY-SIX

THEY caught Frederic and jailed him. But some friend smuggled a bomb to him and he had lit it and placed it in his mouth. Now he lay shattered but still living.

Tonight the city editor said, "Go see if the count's cashed in yet."

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And so you went, though you were almost blind with weariness and your brain seemed noisy as if it were being hammered with too many new impressions. Noisy? Loud as a boiler factory. Perhaps two jobs—school and this—were getting too much.

Here was the jail. Now you were inside it, smelling the chlorine and privy odors of the jail. You stared down at the sodden brown boards and you thought, "Soon I have to look at the wreck." There he was on the high bed. Arm stumps tied. Jaws a mass of sunken bandages. Eyes hollows of hate.

What eyes! There seemed to be a kind of remembering triumph in them. Eyes—you could not turn away. They seemed to talk, just as on the night of the riot. They spoke:

"I said they would not hang me, Spy."

And your eyes answered:

"Anarchist, why did you do it?"

"They called me bastard, Spy. I'm even now."

"All the dead!—and you blown to pieces!"

"Learn to kill, Spy. Get what you want, Fool. What you want is all there is."

"So you didn't care about the men you preached to? You said they suffered——"

"Yeah. And deserve to. Damned cowards. Won't act unless a hand is at their throats."

The reporter felt ill, he couldn't think of a response right away. At last: In a sinking kind of way:

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"Once—once Christ acted for them."

"Did he? Well, any other fool who does will get nailed up, too. Nails. And nothing after. No. Get what you want."

The reporter felt nausea. From the smells, he thought. Then he seemed to himself to be falling through space with nothing to hold to. . . .

After a while, from a long distance off, someone said something about a glass of water.

For several weeks after he had fainted in the jail, he continued his work in a daze. When he went out on assignments, a deadly fear came over him. Would he remember the questions he meant to ask? If he didn't, would the people he interviewed think he was mad? Finally he devised the plan of writing questions on a bit of paper he could hold in his palm. . . . Then the strange thing was that neither questions nor answers seemed to mean anything. And not only they seemed unreal. Often on the way back to the office he would find himself staring at things, a car stove or a passing dray, and wondering if they actually existed. Was he going crazy? Would people soon whisper about him, and have him put away some place? He hated and feared people. He suspected everyone including his mother. . . . Maybe people weren't real either. Nothing real, nothing to hold to. Falling through black space. . . .

But though he hated and suspected people, he did what they told him. His will seemed gone. His mother, the only

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person who realized that something was wrong, suggested that as soon as his June examinations were over, he should go out in the country and visit his Aunt Jane. And he obeyed docilely, although he had no desire to go. . . . Aunt Jane's husband had died, and now she managed a couple of hundred acres of mid-Illinois land with the help of two hired men and a girl. . . . She fixed him a spot on the south porch where he could rest in the sun, and as the days of quiet succeeded each other, the noise in his brain, as of hammers pounding, grew less and less. He began to hear the little sounds of the prairie, and his mind became clear about himself. . . . The reason, he thought, why this sense of falling through space persisted was because he was in that condition, mentally. That was it. He was falling between two ideas: Belief in God, and belief in riches as all there was worth while in life. He must decide to hold to one or the other. Decide or go mad.

Every day after the midafternoon snack, she came out to sit on the porch with him. She did not seem to think him queer, but only tired. Maybe she was only tactful. Once she talked of early days in Chicago, recalled the Mokopo Tavern, and added, "Your father and I called Chicago our city." Then she shut her lips tight, narrowed her eyes so that she could catch the tears on the lashes, and grew silent. She was not inclined to talk though she thought a great deal; he could tell that by the way she would ask him questions about some chance remark of his, long after he had made it. Generally,

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after a few words, she would take a rosary out of her pocket in her black silesia apron, and pass the cocoa beads slowly through her fingers. . . .

He looked at the large upright figure with the yellow haze of the afternoon sun about it, and experienced a kind of envy. What illusions she had to hold to, big ones about earth and heaven! He had no belief, no center, he could not hold to religion. How could he believe in a God who would make a world like this one? No, he felt a violent revulsion of feeling at having been taken in by a visionary unworkable philosophy of life. Of life? Christianity, actually followed, led to death only. His father had been no great saint, but he had answered the demands his ideals made on him as far as he was able, and he'd been killed, and his family left to struggle on alone.

As he regarded his aunt, fingering her beads there, he suddenly hated her, despised all religious people who pretended that Christianity was possible. Why not admit that the law of Nature was the only law—"Get what you want; kill or be killed." In spite of the hypocrisies that people practised, that law was the only one ever kept. The thing to do was to follow it frankly. . . . And yet, Christianity had seemed beautiful to him once, and love possible. . . .

She made a slow large sign of the cross, and now she spoke: "So," she said to him, "you are going to be a lawyer like your father."

In the sudden uncontrollable way that most of his replies came of late, he burst out: "No, not like my father."

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She sat almost as if she had been struck, while he continued: "No, I'm going to make money, to have things."

Now that she knew what he had in mind, she did not seem surprised; she actually nodded as though she had expected for a long time that he would express himself just like that; all she said was, "Oh!"

And, of course, she shouldn't be surprised for there were money makers in the family, his grandmother in Utica, for instance, who had invested luckily and left a tidy fortune to charity—to charity because she disliked her family and enjoyed the publicity given large donors. . . . Odd! His aunt was staring at him, and there were tears in her eyes. Then the queer thought crossed his mind, "She thinks I'm like her mother." . . . At last, quietly, but almost as if she were pleading, she asked: "Will money be enough, do you think?"

Would it? He didn't know. Probably not. But at least money was real, and Christianity did not even exist. . . . Then, since he had seemed to decide for money, how could he begin to get it? Once his mother had said that Matthis would help start him in life. Well, why not let him? . . . Still the old woman with the rosary was studying him as if she could find some way to soften him, and at last she startled him by asking if he ever thought of getting married. . . .

He returned home, sunburned, a little heavier, and with his mind still oscillating like a hit pendulum between old desires and new. With purpose unfixed, he could not work. Why should he solemnly pretend to interests he did not have?

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Nevertheless, since his will appeared gone, he agreed to the proposal that his mother made. She had in desperation, perhaps, seen Matthis who told her he would talk to the young man and maybe place him in the firm that handled the Matthis car-parts cases.

The appointment was at a hotel for dinner, and when the time came, the obstacles in the way of going seemed tremendous. The day—the city—meeting more people——

As he arrived in town, dust whirled in his face, between his lips—dry manure, street dirt, soot. It clogged his nostrils and lodged between his collar and his neck; he could feel the stiff linen rub in the dirt. And every particle, tiny though it might be, reminded him of the meaningless horror of life.

Hand on derby crown, eyelids drawn close, he went on, shrinking from the mobs released from offices. Deserts must be good places, he thought. Here he must do as the hordes he hated did, must hear and see what they heard and saw. . . . On his way down Randolph, he stepped over a skid thrown from a wagon to an open cellar way. He rounded hogsheads stored on the pavement. He avoided an unhitched horse that wandered out of an alley way. He listened to the shriek of an orchestration of a merry-go-round. He zig-zagged his way through the wagons, drays, grip-cars, as he crossed the road, going south on State.

There was the hotel. He did not want to go in. He imagined people in public places observed him and his cheap clothes, saying to themselves, "How queer he is." But they

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who were caught in life not knowing nor caring what it was all about—weren't they the mad ones? He approached the hotel with its sooty gray stone cornices, its peaked doortops with fat classic figures lying on the slants, its dirt-encrusted plate glass windows.

No, he didn't want to go in. He was conscious of his clothes. And did he need a shave? Hurriedly he put his hand to his face for he knew that of late he forgot details like that. His face was stubbly, so he entered the famous barber shop with the silver dollars laid in the flooring. . . .

He went out of the barber shop into the hotel hallway, passing along the backs of shops. This was the bar—What a whisky smell!—and beyond the slat door sounded the "Aylee, Aylee, Olee Man." . . . This was the billiard room where men bent over green baize tables, men who talked and laughed as if they weren't afraid of life. . . . Half-hiding behind a palm, he watched the lobby for Matthis. The spot was a good one, for he could see without being seen. Once there, he thought in contempt, "People are ugly, inconsequential. Why should I care what they think?" . . . A fat man in dress suit and satin waistcoat lounged near the velvet curtains of the dining room: near him was some blondined coryphee, probably from Rice's "Evangeline." "Old Hutch" who'd cornered wheat shuffled by . . . "Old Hutch," who, with Kerby and Murray made the Board of Trade Trinity. Two strangers gaped at the grand staircase, exclaiming, "Two million dollars worth of marble." A man in a checked suit

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complained loudly to his friend, "I want to go to Sam T. Jack's but the wife says no. It's the panorama of Gettysburg for us." A woman's voice rose, "We're going to see everything tonight—even the Cheyenne district." And a man answered, "Well, don't play poker, and look out for Big Mag."

At last you could see Matthis getting out of his brougham. With one hand he clung to a plaid shawl that whipped out in the wind; with the other he pushed down his hat, forcing the straggly lock over his yellow face. One onlooker exclaimed, "There's old Matthis. They'll have to shoot him at the Judgment." Though he wasn't so old.

A hush came over the place when Matthis entered. People whispered his name. They watched Matthis; stared at you as you came forward, and how you looked made no difference now, for you shared in the awe given to the rich. There was warm comfort in such an atmosphere. It would be pleasant to live surrounded with deference.

After a grunt of acknowledgment of your presence, Matthis led the way into the dining room; its big windows were hung with velvet, its walls broken by fluted columns—the whole place done in rose and gold. Matthis glared about for the new head waiter from London who ran forward and bowed deep. You knew him: once the city editor had sent you to write a feature story on "Why do Chicagoans call the new head waiter at the Blank hotel, Mister?" Then he had sniffed at your wrinkled reporter garb; now he included you in his best bows.

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He led you into a private dining-room, a place done in bronze and black with ebony chairs and a sideboard inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and as he drew out the chairs for you, he suggested, "Buffalo tongue, bear loins,—brown, black or cinnamon,—and antelope steak are good tonight." . . . Matthis gave the order with the air of hitting an animal on the snout.

"And for dessert," he concluded, "I don't want any of those green and purple ices nor any of those cakes with red, white, and blue frosting. I want an apple. An apple with skin on it. I want to cut it in two and scrape it. Is that clear?"

Then Matthis threw his Scotch plaid over the Egyptian chair and got ready to eat. As he tucked his napkin under his chin and carried his spoon to his mouth, an old intaglio ring slipped about on one of his fingers; he guzzled his soup, tipped his plate for the last drop, tongued the lip-ends a-blob with white cream. He did what he liked.

Matthis asked many questions. You answered mechanically, only one query remaining with you, "Are you willing to learn everything about my business, even to the running of a locomotive?" And under the spell of the vitality in him, you replied yes.

You remembered how you'd once delivered New Year's cards at his door and had thought him sinfully rich. He seemed to be the devil pointing out all the kingdoms of the world and offering them to you in exchange for your soul. Now he no longer seemed a devil, but—since you habitually,

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though unbelievably, used Biblical phrases—more like an angel come to grant you strength. Being with him caused you a strange exaltation.

His eyes never kindled. They were eyes that might well have faced desperation, black nothingness? Nevertheless, out of nothingness, this man, forgetting fear, had created his own world.



Past straight lines of shadow into the May sun

CHAPTER SIX

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED EIGHTY-EIGHT

DURING the first year in the law firm, the young man slaved with intensity, driving himself with the words, "Money and position—that's all there is to life." Day by day, the determination to make a fortune bigger than Matthis' grew until it obsessed him.

Matthis, apparently pleased at the young man's zeal for work, forwarded his interests and saw that his salary was increased. . . .

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But his mother, who still watched him with a dissatisfied air, spoke as soon as the salary raise came, saying, "You should marry, James."

The remark annoyed and distracted him. He refused to discuss the matter and yet it remained below the surface of his mind to disturb him. And then a thought, all formed, came frankly to him. "Some day your mother will die. Who will look after the little things for you then? You must have your mind free for your new work."

So when she spoke again, he listened. She said, "You should marry Elizabeth Cousins, James. Mrs. Byers' niece, I mean. She'll be graduated from the convent this June."

Then he remembered. Elizabeth Cousins was the girl his mother had always wanted him to marry. He recalled that once in church he had seen her gazing at him and he had thought her angel-like. The child was rich, and riches would help. . . . As for Mrs. Byers, she was willing, for she wanted to go to Europe that next summer and had, he gathered, no desire to take her ward with her. So the match was arranged, and on the following Sunday, Mrs. Byers, his mother and he drove to the west side convent. . . . They sat in Mrs. Byers' victoria, and he was hunched, somewhat uncomfortably, on the little let-down seat.

Over the river to the West Side—the green water was spotted with iridescent slime. To the right was a bony black railway bridge, and on the far bank were railroad yards with straight steel tracks shining against the black cinders, with cabooses

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that had back porches, stove pipes, and little windows, with roofless freights, car after car of dirty red. From the river to the south came the smell of the slaughterhouses, and now from these blocks of square factories beyond the bridge rose the odor of hides and sawdust. In between buildings, the week's factory smoke lay gray and low. . . .

The sound of horses' hoofs echoed hollowly through the empty Sunday streets. Time after time the carriage drove past straight line of shadow into May sun. Both Mrs. Byers and his mother looked hot as they sat in their heavy passementiered silks against plum-colored upholstery. Though sitting on bustles tilted them a little forward, they seemed most erect, with bonnet aigrettes held high.

Was it only the heat that made them uncomfortable, or did they feel now that the time had come for the formal engagement to marry, that they were hurrying the girl too much? Were they a little uneasy, too, at their ulterior motives in the marriage? . . . Mrs. Byers' curls, which were like white zeros below her bonnet, lay damp on her pink forehead. Her mouth, determined though it was, twitched, and the hair-lines converged. When the carriage rolled into the sunlight, her hand jerked the black silk parasol with the pink ruffles as if it were the sunshade's fault it was in the wrong place.

"Of course," she broke out at last, "if the doctor hadn't ordered me to Baden, I should never have suggested that the wedding be so soon. But anyway, she's not been raised

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to decide such matters for herself. The French nuns at her convent believe in having marriages arranged."

Then she looked away; a fold of her chin caught in the trefoil cameo that closed her collar. She seemed to be thinking, seeking for greater justification, and suddenly she bent forward till her padded-looking bosom rose close to her collar. She added softly:

"She's always been attracted to you, James. She always noticed you at church, and once she said, 'He's a nice boy, isn't he? Is he a saint?'"

As the vehicle jolted over the rough roads, he held to the seat, felt its line of scratchy braid. Would they never come to the place? The smell of hides, the black and white of sun and shade, the meaningness voice of this woman seemed never ending. At last. Here was the place—a gray brick fence that enclosed a little park of trees, and a gray building that had a front peak topped with a gold cross. . . . They mounted the horseshoe staircase, and at the door a wizened portress bowed *bon jour*; then, beads a-jingle, she soft-shoed down the hallway to pull the call-bell. One—two—three—

They went into the parlor. The shutters of the south windows were folded completely back and the sun lay bright on the waxed floor, making the rest of the room seem dark. Near the walls were little groups, each with its pupil in black uniform or its nun in black habit. . . . North doors were thrown wide; beyond them were open windows through which came the smell of green things and the plash of a fountain. . . .

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Elizabeth entered through the north door. She stood slim and tall in her black uniform and gloves against the light from the north windows. In spite of all her shy reserve, she radiated the shining excitement of being called to the parlor, this time of all times. . . . Was the guardian right? and was this girl really drawn toward him?

She kissed Mrs. Byers, first on one cheek and then on the other, convent-fashion. Wistfulness was in the act, as if she said to her guardian, "I wish you really cared." He thought, "Orphan. Lonely." Still holding her aunt's hand, she inquired eagerly about her Uncle Gregor, "Is he well? When is he coming to see me?"

Then she courtesied to his mother, and after that, eyes lowered, lips smiling, she bowed to him. . . .

Above her chair was an oil painting of a young saint looking at a crucifix with love. . . . As she conversed rather breathlessly, he watched her, the quick change of light on the smooth dark hair, the sparkle of the brown eyes, the curve of the white smooth cheeks. Now, when her guardian spoke of the European tour, the girl remarked:

"Why, you're going to all the places we pretend to write letters from. Madam Gounoud teaches us Travel Letters. She has traveled—well, not very much of course. Only from St. Louis here—by night."

And after Mrs. Markham mentioned the graduation gown and others being made by the fashionable Nellie Lorden on Archer Road, Elizabeth laughed:

LAKE FRONT

"Soon I'll have to keep a scrapbook of dresses. Madame Genet did. She has pieces of all the gowns she wore when she was a belle in New Orleans."

But when her guardian talked at last of the wedding, the girl had no words at all. Her eyes lowered, to rise again, shining. . . .

If he had believed in love, he would have said there was promise of love in them.



*Passing the wall-
niches with
Greek statues in them*

CHAPTER SEVEN
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
EIGHTY-EIGHT

HE THOUGHT of her often during the month, her youth, her desire for love. Should he, when he could not share her illusion of love, marry her? But, he countered in his own mind, neither could she share his illusion of power. If, however, he allowed her to build her own world as he expected to build his, why shouldn't he

LAKE FRONT

marry her? He knew of no one else who would do. It might as well be she.

Another question that came to his mind was that of being married in church. His revulsion of feeling against religion told him to have nothing to do with a church, but he decided there was no reason for letting his emotion on the question get the better of him for such a lack of control would stand in the way of his material advancement. Refusal to be a church member meant at least partial ostracism from society in this town, and people withheld business from atheists. He would then be conventional.

So one morning in late June, Elizabeth and he were married in St. John's church. He watched as though the ceremony centered about someone other than himself. He noted the reflections of candle light in the altar and the bright-colored discs of light thrown by the stained glass windows in the east wall. He smelled the incense, regarded the churchman in his white vestments coming from the altar to marry them, made responses, walked down the aisle with Elizabeth, and looked with curiosity at the women in the congregation who were wiping away their tears. . . .

In Mrs. Byers' house on the Avenue, breakfast tables were wedged tight in all the first floor rooms. The large gilt-framed mirrors in the double front parlor reflected the white tables, piled high at the centers with smilax, white ribbons, and roses. Mrs. Byers, rustling busily about in her gray silk gown, directed the bride and groom to the table in the front parlor

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where they sat near the big window hung with heavy English lace, their backs to the last of the morning sun. . . . Elizabeth was full of little gasps and trills of pleasure; she seemed not only to be happy herself but to want others to share her feeling. She clung in an odd way to his Aunt Jane, and he had said, "She's the right girl, isn't she, aunt?" To which his aunt, stark in her black gown, had dourly answered, "I'm hoping you're the right man." . . . At the girl's right, sat her Uncle Gregor, a bull-necked fighter who would wipe out you and Matthis if the occasion came. . . . When Elizabeth noticed her husband's nostrils contract at the sight of Gregor, she spoke to him at once:

"I'm sorry you don't like him, Jim. A good many people don't at first, because he's so blunt, but I'm sure you'll grow to like him. He's been so good to me—like a real parent. I couldn't love a father more."

Her feeling for the loud wary-eyed fellow astonished him into looking in Gregor's direction again. She continued:

"He's devoted to those he loves—works night and day so as to have a big business to hand on to his son, John."

She stirred a little petulantly, and then she smiled:

"O, you will like him, won't you, Jim?"

He hadn't meant to be noticeably averse to the man; a bad manner might well be a business disability. . . . Now she was talking to her uncle; was she bringing him to task, too? Gregor did not look converted; he stared in your direction as if he were sizing you up again; with his collar as tight as

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it was, he looked a good deal like a dog held in leash. . . . From the landing came strains of the violinist's, "Oh Promise Me." Once in a while a loud pioneer laugh would hee-haw through the chatter. He could hear one woman affecting a broad eastern *a*. At his left, his mother explained: "The crowd had to be a bit mixed. Mrs. Minster divides her parties, inviting her rich friends one day and her poor friends the next. But you can't be married on two days in succession, can you?" . . . His eyes kept turning back to Elizabeth. . . . Beauty . . . Kindness . . . Was he getting soft? Better look at old Gregor. . . .

Friendship with Gregor might well be an opportunity. . . . Suppose Gregor and Matthis, instead of being rivals, combined. Combination was in the air. The South Improvement Company had been made by the combination of rivals. . . . New combinations sometimes extended from the state throughout the nation. . . .

You became genial to Gregor, asked him about his son, John. . . . Elizabeth leaving to change her gown gratefully pressed your hand.

During her absence, he talked to some purpose to Gregor, and to general questions on the subject of combinations, Gregor, who also unbent, answered, not without interest:

"Yes. I see some sense in mergers."

When, however, there was a movement of the crowd toward the staircase to watch the bride come down again, Gregor had no eyes except for the slight girl descending the

LAKE FRONT

cherry staircase, passing the wall-niches with Greek statues in them.

"My Elizabeth!" Gregor breathed and tears were in his eyes. Soft. Like the old women in the church.

She wore a long trailing bustled dress of canvas and brown velvet; her tiny bonnet with the yellow flowers had a wide ribbon bow beneath her chin. She was well-dressed, distinguished, but her chief characteristic just then was awareness of him as he waited in the hall for her.

Her last farewell kiss, she kept for her uncle Gregor. Then she placed her white gloved hand on her husband's arm, and they walked down the carpeted stairs to the carriage. . . . They were off now, but she did not look back. Did the past hold so little for her, and the future so much?

"What a beautiful day!" she exclaimed as if the words burst from her; with a wave of her hand, she included the blue sky, the green trees, the horses clicking along the hard white macadam of the Avenue, but the gesture seemed to have a larger meaning—June and life and him.

They turned from the Avenue at Oakwoods and then on to Drexel Boulevard with its flowered park strip down the center. With what odd sympathy she looked at all the people who drove by, as if she understood them all and wished them joy—the old codger in the white linen duster who chirped to his bony nag, the young man who sat on his box and held his reins and whip just so, the woman in the surrey who clucked to a long-tailed beast. . . . When the carriage

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drove east on a wide road set in a prairie and dotted with scattered homes, she breathed deep with pleasure. She looked at the wild roses pink against dark leaves, at the young leaves of the cottonwood as they blew white in the soft breeze, and at the blue lake ahead. Turning toward him, she rejoiced, "Oh, I'm glad we're going to be out here in the country!"

A few blocks short of the lake, the rig drove south down their street. There was the occasional frame house with porch, and trees. On the main street of the village, the spire of the church rose above elm trees. Beyond was a row of new cottages, with the paint starey fresh, with the little lawns newly sodded, with the young maple trees freshly planted. The carriage wheels scraped against the curb of the second cottage from the corner. . . .

Breathing fast, feeling for his hand, she left the carriage and mounted the high stairs of their new home with him. She entered the tiny linoleum-covered vestibule with awe, almost as if she was going into a church.

But the sight of all the furnishings his mother and Mrs. Byers had arranged for them made her laugh again. She ran into the small parlor, clasped her hands over the rose trellis wall-paper, felt the white appliqué curtains on the two long front windows, tried the bristling scrolled ingrain carpet with the toe of her shoe. For one moment she sat down approvingly in a high-backed chair with its panel of fruit tapestry edged with red velvet, but the next moment she was up and away through the folding doors into the back parlor so swiftly

LAKE FRONT

that her train bobbed and showed the billows of dust ruffles underneath.

At a rosewood music box near the west window, she stopped, lifted the lid, pulled the lever, watched the pins of the turning brass cylinder as they snapped the teeth of the metal comb into a quavering tune. She turned about to face him, and suddenly looked as though she were going to cry; her eyes puckered a little and her teeth bit her lower lip; then she gasped, "I'm not really crying. I'm glad—I have a real home." And stretched out her arms to him.

How gold the sunlight was about her slimness—The last of the sunlight! There was always a fear about the last of the day's sun as though it urged, "Hurry! Hurry! Take what you can for soon the darkness and death you know so well will come again!" He caught her in his arms, glad to feel her slight body; it was real, real; he could feel it was real. Things you could touch, they were all there was to life. Though she drew her breath quick at his suddenness, she was limp with complete surrender and trust. . . . She thought he was in love with her. In love. In fear—fear of nothingness. . . . He held her tight as though she kept him from an abyss.



He stared at the waters until they were no longer lake

CHAPTER EIGHT

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED EIGHTY-NINE

ELIZABETH proved always to be hungry for affection, or what passed for it, but when she did not receive it, she seemed to regard his restraint as proof of an ascetic nature. And he, he was always afraid of losing his Matthis-like hardness, of becoming soft and incompetent like the sloppy mediocrities of which the world was full.

She was all the more reliant on him for affection, since she had no child to love.

LAKE FRONT

Strangely enough, though she did not seem greatly interested in his business success, she had, nevertheless, been of great aid to him. Thanks to her, Gregor had become friendly and had listened to a proposal for a merger with Matthis. The combination had been so successful up to date that the two backed him in a furtherance of the merger. Thereupon he invited the larger companies throughout the state to "come in;" some hotly refused, saying, "We'll not be in any trust." So he went then to railroads and got them to give a secret low freight rate to the combination. This low rate enabled the combine to undersell and freeze out the little firms. Soon he'd extend the combination across the country; there'd be a nation-wide trust.

"Do that," Matthis said to him—and Matthis was the largest of all the producers of car-parts, "and I'll see you're made president of the nation-wide merger."

Returning home tonight along the lake on the Illinois Central, he kept thinking, "I will have the presidency, and one of the greatest fortunes in the country besides."

That early summer evening, Elizabeth and he sat out on the high step. He did not tell her of Matthis' promise, but only said: "I expect we can move into a better house soon."

Startled, she turned toward him.

"But I like this place, Jim. You know. It's my first real home. You'd call that just sentiment maybe."

Then, as if she were afraid she might have hurt him, she bent toward him earnestly and said:

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"Jim I'm—I'm awfully proud of your success." And a minute later, she said almost abjectly: "I guess it's being where you are that makes home."

Nevertheless, she clasped her hands over the knees of her lavender surah gown and watched with new intensity the little familiar evening ritual of the neighborhood. Next door to them, a householder held his thumb over the end of his hose and wavily sprayed his grass till now the water overflowed on the walk, turned the gray cement brown, and gurgled into the sewer. Across the street, a man in shirt-sleeves raked the grass he had just cut—the fresh odor reached you; beyond the shadows of his open barn door, a horse whinnied and stamped against mosquitoes. Now women were turning their porch chairs around and tipping them against the wall. Then there was the sound of keys clicking in front door locks—it must be nine o'clock—and hall-lights went out. The whole place became as still as open country. Its stillness almost lulled the will to sleep.

Alone there, they watched the yellow moon rise over the young maples, they watched the rich black shadows that it cast. Why did the earth seem so close to you that you could almost feel it stir to fulfillment? . . . She had come nearer to him; he smelled her sweet warmth, saw the rise and fall of her bosom. He trembled with resistance to her, to the gentleness she roused in him. . . . Wealth was all there was. He must remember that.

"I do appreciate all you've done, Jim." Why was it that

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all her protestations made him positive that money meant almost nothing to her? "So does Uncle Gregor. He said, 'Jim has brains and uses them.'"

Just the name of someone connected with his work roused all the hot ambition of the day in him so that he forgot to listen to her, conscious only that she continued to talk. Then, all at once, he started to attention as if some inner self prompted, "Wake up and listen, you day-dreaming fool, hear this!"

"At first," she was saying, "I was surprised that Uncle Gregor joined with Mr. Matthis. Everyone knew his dearest dream was to place his son, John, at the head of his company.

"But now I see the reason why he went in. So he could put John at the head of a much larger business."

It was all so simple and clear that he hadn't even seen it. Gregor meant to let you do all the spade work and when the hard, dirty jobs were over, he would make his son, John, head of the combination. He stiffened; she seemed to interpret the action as a slight shrinking from her, and, inordinately sensitive, she jumped up at once:

"I'm sorry, Jim. I've talked and talked like an old woman. Now I'll let you think in peace."

With that, the light dress whisked over the threshold. . . .

It was as well to know now. . . . His fingers rapped his knees, till he became too nervous to remain sitting there any longer. Suddenly he leaped to his feet, ran down the front stairs, and began to walk rapidly away. He was only half aware that he was leaving her, that he was striding far:

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Grit of gravel beneath his feet. Hollow echo of his shoes on a wooden walk. The lighted saloons along the old pony post road. The dredge of his boots through the shore sand. . . . Tired, he sat down to rest on a log near the lake. . . . He must not endanger the young merger by acting against Gregor now. . . .

The moon had gone behind a cloud. The dark waves washed in and out, time after time, time after time. For a long period he stared at the waters until they were no longer lake, but the blackness through which he fell alone that day he had fainted at the jail. . . . Shuddering at the recollection, he nevertheless remembered the great thing that being with Matthis had taught him. There was only one thing to hold to, work and what you got for it. . . .

He'd work. He'd get all there was. He'd freeze out Gregor and his parasitic son. Slowly. He'd get that presidency for himself and what happened to them was no look-out of his.



"When you grow up you can say you saw the Fair"

CHAPTER NINE

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED NINETY-THREE

FOR him, the informal little party at the World's Fair tonight was in the nature of a celebration.

Elizabeth stood at the door of the library of their new house, saying, "I'm ready." In the wide doorway between the mahogany wainscoted walls, she looked like a young girl. She was gowned with taste—not overdressed like many of the new rich here; she wore a simple three-cornered blue hat

LAKE FRONT

with a high silk bow, a blue suit that had a short coat with leg o' mutton sleeves and broad white lapels. She watched a little tensely to see if he approved of her appearance or not, and noting that he did, relaxed.

They crossed the hallway, its new dark hardwood spread with Kazak rugs of bold design. The new butler opened the door of the porte-cochère; the coachman waited with the victoria and the horses stamped the cement drive, anxious to get away. . . . As they drove off, he looked back at the big gray stone house that loomed large in the early September dusk. Seen through the foliage of the trees on the green lawn, the place was like a small chateau, a place run, like his business, with all the efficiency of an Amberg file. There was achievement. And there would be more to come now that Gregor had definitely—perhaps he should tell her.

"Your uncle," he said at last, "sold out to us today."

She started more than he supposed she would.

"Oh, I'm glad you spoke of him, Jim. He hasn't been to see us in the longest time, and I've been worried. I couldn't stand it any longer so I called him up today. He said nothing was wrong; he'd just been busy——"

Her husband verified her uncle's statement with a nod. She continued:

"Just as he hung up the receiver, he happened to say he was going to Old Vienna, too, tonight."

Then she paused looking at him almost breathlessly to see if he knew whether or not all were well with her uncle.

LAKE FRONT

"He seemed satisfied with the new arrangement." He had appeared satisfied—almost too content; had the old dog some new trick in mind? "You know, Elizabeth, your uncle decided he did not like the combination because it didn't give him quite enough assurance that his son, John, would be the new president."

"And didn't it?" There was an air of surprise about her, as if she could not imagine her uncle Gregor not getting his way.

"No. So when Matthis agreed to buy him out at a very handsome figure, he agreed."

"But what will John and he do now? Go back by themselves?"

"Certainly not. Don't you see that might be fatal for the merger? He is strong here. If he beat us on our own ground, we should be weakened with the rest of the country."

She looked as though she were trying to understand. He continued:

"So, on receiving his money, he signed an agreement that he would never go back in the car-parts business."

That was something that was quite clear. She leaned forward:

"But, Jim. What'll he do? That was his life."

To tell the truth, he had been astounded at Gregor's willingness to sign. Her hand touched his:

"You're sure, Jim, that he's—satisfied."

"I think I have said so," he returned peevishly. If Gregor

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turned out not to be satisfied—well, the paper was signed, and the law could take its course. There were enough difficulties for the future without mulling over those of the past: money was tight, and labor was restless at the new mergers with their power to blacklist and to dictate wages. But he'd fight through hell now the presidency was clearly ahead.

Her brow puckered, she leaned back again and said nothing until they had taken their wheel chair in the Court of Honor for their last look at the Fair. Then in the light from the electric fountains, she studied his face and said in a low voice, earnest to the point of quavering:

"You know, I don't know what it's all about, but I'm sure you'll see that things are right for him. He's very dear to me."

Then, with an assured air that since she had spoken to him everything was settled, she began to look about her. . . . A young mother wheeled a baby carriage past them and chanted to the child, "Now when you grow up, you can say you saw the Fair. Now when you grow up, you can——" . . . Elizabeth smiled at the child, sighing a little. . . .

As dusk settled over the white Grecian buildings and the dark lagoon, as the fountains played and the gondolas plashed by, he watched her. Her clear-cut beauty belonged in this Court of Honor. . . . Then they turned down the Midway, and saw the roof lines of German village, Irish castle, Egyptian temple, Japanese houses, Dahomey huts against the pale western sky. Strange people passed them: a Bedouin in flowing white garments. A Swami in orange robes. A

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Chinese with hands tucked into large sleeves. A Laplander with fur hood dropped back from broad sweating face.

After the quiet of the Court, the noise here jangled: There was the whinny of a slant-rumped Arabian horse. The roar of a lion in a zoo. The chant of the man at the Turkish candy bazaar, "Bon bon, *very* bon bon." The squeak of the reed instrument as a girl before a dime museum did a hootchy-kootchy dance. The pound, pound, pound of a Dahomey drum. . . . It came with the persistency of the thought that Gregor was beating him. . . .

At last they rolled up the road to Old Vienna. And no sooner had they gotten out of the chair than a man came toward them—seemed to come from behind one of the tall motionless Viennese guards at the door—and stood, hat in hand:

"Mr. O'Mara!"

Some fellow from the office! Elizabeth went on a little.

"Excuse me, sir, but Mr. Matthis said you expected to be here tonight—told me to tell you Gregor's wagons were on the street this afternoon."

Gregor on the street! Hadn't Elizabeth said her uncle would dine here tonight? He wheeled abruptly and followed Elizabeth.

"What is it, dear?" she questioned, putting out both hands.

For a moment they stood in the glare of the light from the restaurant door and he looked down at her, only vaguely seeing her, and only dimly hearing the orchestra playing the "Blue Danube." . . . He must see Gregor at once.

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They entered the big room. He was conscious of a hush, of some person saying, "It's O'Mara!" But he kept on, following the waiter and searching the tables for Gregor. As he looked intently here and there, he saw little bits of the scene: A woman with piled up brown hair, head held high above the pearl collar about her neck. A goateed man. . . . He listened for voices and heard little scraps of conversation "It's so nice the very best people from New York came to the Fair." "Of course, Chicago's only an overgrown village."

Now he could feel a pair of eyes staring at him. He looked across the room, and there he saw Gregor and his son John at a table for two. At the same moment, Elizabeth exclaimed, "Why, there's uncle. Do go and bring him over."

"You sit here," he answered. "I'll go see your uncle."

His head stuck out from his bull neck, his eyes narrowed, Gregor kept watching the other's advance. Somewhere near him, the boy John looked, too, but he wasn't worth a glance. . . . Gregor did not rise; the newcomer snapped:

"Your wagons were on the street today. You seem to forget you signed an agreement never to go into the car-parts business again."

Lifting his lip over the left eye tooth, Gregor snarled out of that corner of his mouth:

"And I'm not in business. But my son John is. And he can have every damned cent I've got."

There was nothing to be said at such a complete checkmate as this. He heeled about, and with every step his cold rage

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grew more intense. He returned to Elizabeth's table, almost without realization that she was there, until she made him start by speaking: "Isn't uncle coming to dine with us?"

He stared at her incredulously and answered, "No."

She studied his face, her eyes becoming more and more troubled. Let them. His course was set.

"Jim," she pleaded, "tell me what's the matter between uncle and you. I can't bear—I love you both—Tell me."

"All right," he answered shortly. "I'll tell you. Your uncle's tricked us—gone back into business."

She cocked her head on one side and turned her hands palms upward on the table, as if to say, "Well, what does that matter?"

"But, Jim dear, don't you see you couldn't expect a man like him to sit quietly at home?"

He glared steadily at her. Her eyes growing wide as if she saw something like murder in him, she leaned forward, and demanded:

"What are you going to do, Jim?"

Her voice had begun bravely, then quavered. It was as though she saw at last that beside his business, neither she nor her dear ones mattered to him. Her illusion would be shattered now and she, too, would know what it was to be cast into darkness. He answered:

"I am going to wipe him out."



*He made them
part of the machine*

CHAPTER TEN
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
NINETY-FOUR

FOR a year he had fought Gregor and now, he thought, he had him.

Though Elizabeth was keenly conscious of the struggle and knew well enough now that business meant more to him than she did, her world did not seem to be shattered for her. There was no doubt but that she experienced blackness, but she apparently argued to herself, her sight, not her world, was gone. She realized his indifference to those she loved and to her,

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but thought that, unknown to himself, he cherished love for her. On that thought, she appeared to live.

This trouble, and the carrying of her child, had changed her from girl to woman. . . . His mother would be unable to be in the house during the birth of the child, for, she said, she was ill; however, he suspected that she merely disliked assisting on such occasions. At her suggestion, and to Elizabeth's pleasure, he had sent for his Aunt Jane. . . . She had arrived that morning in her black poke bonnet and her long black cape, firmly resolved to do her work unimpressed at the grandeur of his house; she looked about at the French gilt furniture in the double parlors as if she were grimly remarking to herself, "What shall it profit a man though he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Her coming left him free for the fight. If he could show himself stronger than Gregor, the car-parts concerns throughout the country would say, "Our merger's safe with him." And now, he thought, the time had come. Labor troubles were breaking fast. Workers were restless at the panic times, at mergers and wage-cuts. Out at Pullman such big cuts had been made that the laborers declared they might as well starve striking as working. Then, one fine day, a tall, thin monk-like labor leader had come to town. "Unfetter the slaves out at Pullman," he begged the railmen's union. "If necessary, strike with them. Give them strength. Refuse to move Pullman palace cars. If your road fires you, all the men on that road will go out. Merger against mergers. Fight. Win."

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During the first comparatively orderly days of the strike, Gregor sent out his daily train. So did Matthis. Even when the mobs of the unemployed and of left-over World's Fair crooks swarmed the yards, tipped cars, burned them, smashed red and green lights, spiked switches and blocked trains with their bodies, Gregor kept on. One train a day. But this morning, his engineer had been shot, and Gregor, soft-hearted fool, swore he'd send out no more men.

Then, to beat Gregor, Matthis' train must go through. However, though the hot July sun was already coming through the west windows of his factory office, he had as yet been unable to make arrangements. This afternoon, he had no engine left but Hoodoo Fifty-nine, a locomotive no blue-lipped scab had been able to urge farther than the city limits; no one would touch it any more, saying "It has a jinx."

Bah! Machines were not to blame for the things that happened to them, only the man who ran them. . . . Could you, yourself, take it out? Once you'd made a run. Matthis had some pioneer notion you should show men you could do all they did and more, and he had persuaded you to learn——

Through the open windows came the stench of a carload of dead cattle that the strikers would not move. The murmur of the mob, too. Now it rose to the taunting shriek of, "Get y'r God-dam train out!"

He looked through the window. Out in the gritty glare, the crowd pawed the bottom of the cinder railroad siding and screamed at the watchman, Peg Leg Kearney, as he stumped

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between the rails. A woman whose flat clay-colored face was slimed with heat, menaced him with her fists until her big bosom shook; a man who wore the strike sympathizer's white ribbon tied to the suspender over his sweat-blackened shirt, spat in Kearney's direction and called out, "Son of a bitch!" Only the armed deputies at the top of the track held the mob back from Kearney. . . .

What had the fool gone out for? . . . Through a cloud of dust south on the track, a fellow riding a hairy-hoofed nag gradually emerged. Looked like the reporter from the *Item*. Yes, he had his coil of wire and sounder hung on his chest, and the mob was shouting, "Liar!" Easy enough to guess what he'd come to ask, "Will you try to get Hoodoo Fifty-nine out tonight?" Well, Kearney would not tell him anything that would cause him to climb a telegraph pole and call a despatcher. . . . But Fifty-nine would run. Strike or no strike, his works had stopped for no one—beat of the machines below was steady as a pulse throb—and his daily train had gone out. . . .

Sound of Kearney's peg leg knocking up the wooden stairs. . . . Though he sympathized with the strikers, he stayed with you. He worshipped Curtin, strike leader, fanatic, but had some sentiment about sticking—you'd given him the watchman job after a train wreck had ended his days as engine foreman; his father had been in the O'Mara post, and Peg Leg himself, had an eager, hungry look as if he wanted to give you the same sort of veneration his father had offered yours.

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. . . Perhaps the fool thought you too believed in the rights of man. . . .

Now Kearney leaned against the door jamb; sweat banged the short, thin brown hair on the hat-ringed forehead; the dust of the yards was black paste on his red face; as he fanned himself with his dingy straw hat, he said, "*Item* man didn't have much to say. Only that the strike leaders have promised to get that dead-cattle train out of here by four tomorrow morning—it's due in a rendering plant at Junosville."

And as you looked at Kearney you felt disgust. No wonder the man was still a watchman! Under his eyes, you turned to look at a railway map that hung on the west wall and hunted with your finger for Junosville. How hot and sticky the glazed surface was! On the L. M. T. A straight, easy run, entering no big yards. Then, since the track would be cleared for the union train, you could follow—not too closely—to, say, three stations this side of Junosville and hand the train over to a crew you could have waiting there. . . .

The phone rang. It must wait.

You told Kearney that you'd take the jinx out, and he almost insisted on going with you. Then he stumped away to get your supper. That would take some time. He'd have to buck up against part of the mob at least, and besides, since the short-order houses in the neighborhood would not sell to company men, he would have a long walk. For all that, he would get no more for his dog-like devotion; all you wanted was machine-like service, and you could always buy that. . . .

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The phone rang again. You would not answer. No one but Kearney should know you were there. With the coming of darkness, the mob died away, but before you lit the gas, you pulled down the shades for fear of a chance shot. In the event of a train wreck, there were matters here to be seen to, instructions to leave for your secretary. . . . Work done, you turned out the light. Window curtains edged with red! You jerked up a shade, listened to engines clanging as to a 4-11 fire alarm. What a red glare in the sky! Must be the Keokuk yards with all the freights a-blaze. . . . Let 'em blaze!

Burn and riot! My night shift keeps at work. Hear the throb below! That pulse is mine. . . .

High-flung leather belts whirr up to ceiling cobwebbed in blackness and down again to lathe wheels—he could see it in his mind's eye. Workers stand in long rows, tables behind them and machines before. They put rough steel molds under grinding teeth that gnaw off rust. They shoot the steel on to the next process till it is loaded on the waiting cars. . . . Every day. The freights must go out every day.

Once when he was young, he thought, he'd wanted to help the human race. Now with no such sentimental aspirations, he aided them in the way he knew was best. He made them part of the machine, part of the steel they worked with—speedy efficient cogs to be scrapped when useless. The day would soon come when men could live only if they were machine-like; the day would soon come when the loop of the

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"L" would be tightened round the throat of the city till emotional men died, and mechanical men only, went on living. And without feeling, life was easier. He knew. . . .

Yes, tonight that train will go out. No rioters will stop me. Their life or mine. I beat Gregor. I get my merger.

Again the phone, pleading sharply.



*No sound but the
ringing in an empty room*

CHAPTER ELEVEN
EIGHTEEN HUNDRED
NINETY-FOUR

SINCE James had sent to the country for her, Jane had spent most her time in this big darkened room, looking at the girl who lay there, fanning her, hoping with her that James would come.

The older woman knew from that Christmas time long ago what it was to come to such a time, her own man not near her. . . . But Michael had loved her. . . . Whereas this boy James. . . .

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Elizabeth kept her face toward the wall though now and again she would be feeling for your hand to see were you there. Her hair lay flat and dark on her hot forehead and the young cheeks were sunk as though the new life within drew hard indeed. Again she pressed your hand, but all the while it was James she wanted, longing for him till all around her could feel the hurt in her. . . . You knew; you had loved Michael so. That night, after you'd been told he had gone down with his boat, you seemed to see your mother, the spirit in the storm that brought him to his death. . . . Was the evil that was in her, in Jim too? Were she and her grandson the same?

From out in the hallway came the voices of the nurse and the doctor. Two maids brought in a clothes basket with wet sheets in it; they would hang these in the room to make it cooler. . . . Once you'd feared your mother would dominate all you had, would make you and the child come back to live with her and work out your board, you lacking any other place to go; you'd feared she'd deny James, your brother, his schooling as soon as he said he had no vocation. But you had earned your living yourself and you had gotten James through the university. You had won against that spirit of evil, and now you felt as if it was close to you again, and you doing nothing.

As soon as she seemed to doze, you would go try to get James on the phone. He was young; he couldn't be all hard yet. . . . There was no answer. . . . You thought to slip

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back to your place with her not knowing you'd been gone, but when you came close to the bed again, her eyes were on yours asking was he coming, and when you said something soft to put her off, her eyes half-shut to keep the tears in, and she turned toward the wall again. . . .

It was when the girl's pain began, you tried the phone once more. . . . No sound but the ringing in the empty room. . . . After the boy was born, you saw the tiredness heavy on her; weary she was, but not with the pain of the body only. Too worn-out to fight, she died. . . .

And for the last time, you tried the phone, and it rang in the darkness like it might be your mother laughing at you.



Long, thin arms raised, he threw himself in the gap

CHAPTER TWELVE

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED NINETY-FOUR

IN THE bloody light, you could see Kearney's face at the door. He whispered, "Hear the puffing? Cattle car's leaving the spur ahead. I just phoned a deputy up the track to make sure."

You felt your way down the dark stairs and went out a door that led into an uncovered passage between the north and

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south plants. Above was the moon in the paling sky; to the west, a barred gate, and to the east, the loaded cars. The plant doors were open, and the gas lights lay a thinning yellow on the red brick walk. A vagrant early breath of coolness touched you and was gone. . . .

While Kearney swung a lantern for a last look at the couplings, you went on to the engine. . . . In its stenciled whiteness, the hoodoo number, Fifty-nine, stared at you from the oblong strip beneath the cab windows, but jinx figures had no effect on you. This engine was a battered hulk with a top-heavy look; nevertheless, its high boiler and firebox on top the frame had set a railroad style some thirteen years ago and the thing was still good. . . . Kearney had built a fire fit to burn the crown sheet. . . . There he was, alongside now, sniffing the air. . . . "Don't smell carcass now, do you? Guess we can go all right."

Fifty-nine was out on the open track. It jumped a frog, nearly cracked your head on the cab top. It slued and wobbled. . . . Look! From a shanty, a man, still snapping his suspenders up, ran out, pointed, yelled to someone inside the hut. No, you spy, this isn't the cattle car scheduled to go through. It's a scab train. Telephone ahead, will you? Get your mob farther up the tracks. Go on, if you want to. We stop for no one.

Cab was hot as the red sun in the misty east. . . . Here was a stretch of dirty red brick factories with gray frame houses stuck between. . . . Now the high, long fences about the

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stock yards, with square pens beyond, with runways to the slaughterhouses. . . . Safe past the yards, and still the track was clear. . . .

What was Kearney thinking? This was the district of his striker friend, Curtin. Curtin, the fanatic. . . . Red windows in the wooden homes and flats; gray weeds in the vacant lots. . . . "Look! The bell rope of that ditched locomotive is whipping up and down. A boy is leaning out the window. Has he given an alarm?" Far down along the tracks, springing up from nowhere were people, white, black, and yellow. They hurled themselves up the side of the tracks, shook their fists, *u*-ed ahead of the freight train. Scared of the speed, were they? Afraid of sure death? They failed to join the *U* on the tracks, failed to block the train with their bodies.

All afraid? No. There was one man. Bearded fanatic. Long thin arms raised, he threw himself in the gap. Kearney jerked himself from the window, screamed, "O Christ, stop," reached for the throttle. . . . "Shut me off, will you?" You pushed him to the wall. Now the fender caught the madman on the tracks, hurled his body into the clear. . . . Kearney groaned as if the heart had been wrenched out of him, "God have mercy!"

Roar of the mob behind, and then the straight stretch through the baked prairie; leaves hang long and limp near cornstalks. . . . There was a dead man back on the siding, a fool to get in the way. . . .

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Even out here there was trace of the vandals. Sometimes a car tipped over on the other track, sometimes a half-burned switch-house or a charred upright that must have held a watchman's tower once. Here a farmer in a broad peaked straw hat pulled up a team that reared at the train going through. . . . Next station would be yours. . . . Up there at the red depot, your crew waved its caps. You choked the engine, lurched to a standstill. . . . As you clambered from the cab, your body still vibrated, the air felt cold. You staggered across the gray splintery planks and fell on to a bench next the station, a hard bench sectioned off with iron arms. Across your knees, the shadow of the deep roof projection made a sharp line. What did Kearney matter?

His face gone white, he slumped on the station step, murmured the name "Curtin" over and over. Had you——

Suddenly you leaned forward. What was that sound? A train in the east. Had the white-livered crew gone into reverse? No. At last, nose-foremost, this train chugged across the prairie into sight. Soldiers on the cow-catcher, soldiers on the coal truck, soldiers on the car tops, Chicago-bound, sent by the President. . . .

Victory was sure then. Your train daily! You'd beat Gregor! Your merger was assured.

They took him back on these cars, back toward Chicago. . . . As he rode, he thought of the approaching city with an enthusiasm unusual in him. He saw the place in his mind, its bony black bridges, its big-bellied freighters painted white,

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black and red and riding on the river, its cobblestone streets, its dark gray or brown stone buildings; these buildings were five stories for the most part with high points like the Montauk, the Auditorium Tower, and the nineteen flights of the Masonic Temple. . . . From the tower, you could see out to the new south limits at 138 Street, a city gridironed with railroads and crowded with factories, granaries, freight-houses, and chimneys belching smoke; a city marked with car-lines and elevated roads on which people came back and forth to work, to work on the big new machines, to become like them, efficient, unemotional, scrapped when useless. . . .

It was an ugly city. Its lines were hard and sharp. Its color, smoke. Its air, gritty. Its noise, strident. Its smell, salt with the blood of slaughterhouses. Its people, pale and hurried.

But Chicago would become the first of all cities. . . .

World's Fair prophets promised that Chicago would one day build bridges across its river more beautiful than those across the Seine; that, abating its smoke, it would erect skyscrapers higher than the Temple, buildings of the whites and pale grays of Paris; that it would connect its great parks with green boulevards; that it would make land in the lake and create with its own hands a shore lovely as the Riviera; that it would buy the forest encircling the city as a playground for the fifty million people who would be here before another century passed by. Dreams? Dreams that the growth of industry and wealth here would make possible. He, and others

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here, had shown industry could be made to grow, whatever the obstacles. In a short time, Chicago would become the center of the industrial world and that would mean the leading city of the globe, for soon the entire world would go over to the machine. . . . Then heads of industry here would control the world. . . . And he, still young, was one of these. . . .

There was the city, in reality, before them. . . . Soon everyone would know that he had won. . . .



EPILOGUE



*Stuck up the
guy, told him
to beat it*

THE foreman piped your fake foot, gave your runt shape the double-o, and sneered. You might go higher and get leave to stay. Who'd you see? O'Mara III? Oh, yeah! "What the hell can I do?" asked the foreman. So you were canned with the T. B. guy, junked with the cougher. Tonight the last night for both of you. . . .

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Morning was sure slow on its feet, always had been. . . . You looked at the windows stuck up high along the north wall of the grinding shed—the yellow light in the box of the hanging conveyor outside streaked back and forth. . . .

You jammed another dulled steel tooth into the clamp of the grinder. . . . “Push the slant-end next the emery wheel; step on the pedal.” G-r-rh! . . . Sparks flew red and died black against the goggles, overalls, and bare forearms; the air was thick with muck. . . . “Unclamp the sharpened tooth, limp across the earthen floor, slam the bar on the table top, grab another from the shelf below, go back to your line of twenty.” . . . “Yell your head off, you lousy foreman. Let the wops wait to fill their damned barrows. Why should I hurry?” . . .

Night faded away. You got paid off, you left at the south gate, crossed the street at the end of the car tracks. . . . October blew cold across that west prairie; nothing to hold the wind back except the street signposts of the new subdivision. . . . Job or no job, you gave the newsboy his nickel; cripple too. . . . “American Restaurant” was in shiny raised letters on the window of the corner store; just as soon as you sat on your high stool, Nikolas the Greek pushed your coffee over the porcelain counter. To hell with that mirror opposite! You ain’t wanting to stare at no outa work bum. . . . You flapped your fin about the straight thick mug, propped the paper against the tall glass sugar bowl with the patent spill and read, “Gangster Kills as He Hijacks Liquor Truck.” . . .

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What was there to do but go home and tell 'em you'd lost your job? You dragged along to the "L"; only a few night workers slumped around in the straw seats, but as soon as flats and factories got thick, people crammed on so tight they couldn't fall unless they busted through the iron platform gates—products on spool conveyors going to the next department, only products had room. . . .

Click of the "L" wheels made you think of the sound of the yellow ducks that jerked along the end wall of Nigger Jim's shooting gallery. Remember the big guy there who'd tried to swipe a prize you'd won? You'd banged him on the bean, and a big bull had pinched you for assault with intent to kill. When you stood before the bench, his Honor couldn't see you, had to rise and peer over before he could find the killer. Even the flatfoots laughed. . . . Well, you'd seen a bird could be so dumb he didn't know you had rights till you'd shown him; so after that you'd packed a mean rod. . . .

Sluice off at the transfer station; your home is next door. . . . You lagged along, not wanting to go in. . . . Pink gum wrappers on the "L" stairs; little girl with greasy bakery bag coming out the first floor delicatessen's; two birds swinging their lunch pails down the darkness of the narrow stairway.

Slow, you stuck your key in the door. . . . You had the back rooms in the long flat and your wife and mother sure kept 'em nice; those two scrubbed the floors raw, hung up stiff clean curtains every two weeks, burned a red light on

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top the golden oak desk before the picture of the Sacred Heart. Besides keeping house, they went to work too, sure did their share. They'd feel awful bad about your——. . . Sudden, you slid out your key. You'd get your job first. The hell you'd go in!

All day you answered ads. Once you passed along the flops on West Madison street, and the sunk look on the down-and-outs made you work fast. . . . It was ten or eleven that night before you thought of a fellow you knew who worked in a Gold Coast hotel; maybe he could tip you off to something. . . .

Feeling wanted as the small-pox, you moseyed down a dark street where row after row of the old stone homes had gone rooming-house. In some of the greasy windows, lights burned, and you could see food-boxes parked on the ledges. . . . Two guys passed holding on to a fat man who looked half-shot, took him down the alley, probably to frisk him. . . . In this house was a black hole where a basement laundry used to be—wouldn't stand for the racket, so it was busted in with a pineapple. . . . Seems like there was still one way to make money. . . . You felt your rod. . . .

Just as you got under the alley arc lights, a big truck tried to back up to the service entrance of the hotel. You were ready to call, "All right, Pull her straight now" when you saw the tarpaulin had slipped; the truck was loaded with liquor. One man on the seat. Nobody around. You had your gun. . . . You hopped to the box, stuck up the guy, told him to beat it.

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Did he? And how! . . . You drove the truck up Nigger Jim's Alley. . . .

Forty grand in all for that, but you split with the three who helped you get rid of the stuff. Afraid your mother would be suspicious, you'd bought a florist shop and told your family a guy had staked you to it. Later you rented an apartment off the Drive. . . .

Your mother looked worried as though she'd rather keep on working and living in a cockroach flat. But your wife—Why, she just naturally took to class, bought a floor lamp and pianola, got you to wear a Tuxedo at dinner, and to ride horseback mornings in the park. . . . Being on the up and up yourself, you sent the crippled boy on Nikolas' corner to a famous doctor, you shipped the T.B. guy out to a ranch in Arizona. . . .

Though you shot for business reasons only, you found the time soon came when the little gangs in the beer and alky racket were wiped out, and just the Big Three were left—you on the North Side, Weinstein on the West, and Di Julio on the South. The same day you got square with Di Julio—his Frank Lombroso had shot your Bay City Louie—you got the big idea. One of your swell customers put you next. . . .

The day after you'd opened up on Frank, you got word to Weinstein and Di Julio. Di Julio seemed to like the idea, and, just by way of showing that he knew you had to shoot, sent you a thousand dollars for flowers for Lombroso's funeral. . . . Weinstein put it there. Date was made, and you

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ordered feedbags for three at one of the classiest of the Michigan Boulevard hotels. You had a merger all doped out. It would regulate prices, increase profits, wipe out shooting, and this last, of course, would cut out the chief high cost of protection.

Weinstein came in with the new beard he was hiding behind. Di Julio was late. At last he sent big Carlo in to say that old lady Lombroso had set up a yowl and that he'd have to go see her. But, he promised, he'd give his answer later. . . .

Little habit of yours never to get in your private can—pale gray outside and in, German silver fittings and a purple robe—without wondering if you were going on a one-way trip. “Cut the tragedy. When the merger goes through, things'll be different.” . . . Chimes like Sunday came from the gold-topped tower of the Straus place. Your car rode along the roof-top shadows of the buildings on the west. Grant Park was green on the east, new stone viaducts crossed the train tracks out to the made land, out to the little old blue lake. . . . Now, way ahead, was the tile of the Wrigley buildings, and the stone of the Tribune Tower, white, gray, against the blue sky. . . . Here was the boulevard bridge. Some bridge! Its fence hit the graveyard monuments at the corners and then swept back in big curves; its stone stairs led down to the green river. River was about done for; it interfered with street traffic and would soon be filled in. . . .

Just a fancy of yours to feel under the counter that had the trailing arbutus on it to see if the extra gat was still there. . . . Then you looked over the wreaths and broken pillars that

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were ready for the Lombroso funeral, all lined up near the window, convenient for Di Julio's men whenever they would come. You pulled a brown petal from a pink rose, you fixed a fern. . . .

A woman, looked like your mother, went up the steps of the yellow stone cathedral opposite. She'd got on to you all right, all right. Didn't care about cops so much as about God, and spent all her time praying. . . . Would she rather have you lie down in some flop and bellyache instead? . . . God, what else was there?

Lookit the can stopping at the door. Big Carlo and two other Di Julio men got out smiling. When they entered, you said, "Hello, boys; come for the flowers?" Big Carlo stuck out his friendly paw. Then—froze to your hand! Guns out. Put on the spot——

Woman on the church steps. . . . God, I ask You? . . .



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